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Does Better Governance Improve Service Delivery? Evidence and Lessons Learned from the Guinea *Faisons Ensemble* Project

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RTI INTERNATIONAL

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the late Rebecca S. Gadell and Daniel E. Gerber. Becky was the creative force behind the development of the "With Many" approach and its application to the Guinean context as *Faisons Ensemble*. Dan was a tireless advocate for improved governance in Africa. Under his leadership, *Faisons Ensemble* achieved many of the results documented in this paper. Both made extraordinary contributions to improving governance throughout Africa and in Guinea. Both left us prematurely when they still had so much more to contribute. They are missed all over the world, but nowhere more than in Guinea.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANCG	*Association Nationale des Communes du Guinée* / National Association of Guinean Communes
APEAE	*Association des parents d'élèves et amis de l'école* / Association of Parents and Friends of the School
ANPROCA	*Agence Nationale pour la Promotion Rural et le Conseil Agricole /* National Agency for Rural Development and Advisory Services
APS	Annual Program Statement
CBO	community-based organization
CDM	*Cadre du Développement Municipal* / commune development framework
COGEF	*Comité de Gestion de Forêt* / Forest Management Committee
CR	*commune rurale /* rural commune [formerly known as rural development community, *communauté rurale de développement*]
CSH	*Comité de Santé et d'Hygiène* / Health and Hygiene Committee [formerly known as *Comité de Gestion de Santé,* COGES]
CSO	civil society organization
CU	*commune urbaine /* urban commune
DSEL	*Diagnostic Socio-économique Local* / local socioeconomic diagnostic
DTS	deconcentrated technical service
ERO	*Évaluation Rapide Organisationnelle* / Rapid Organizational Assessment
FAST	USAID Fragile States Assessment process
GOG	Government of Guinea
MATD	*Ministère de l'Administration du Territoire et de la Décentralisation* / Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NRM	natural resource management
PLWHA	people living with HIV/AIDS
RTI	RTI International (trade name of Research Triangle Institute)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCT	voluntary counseling and testing

ABSTRACT

Guinea's path toward good governance has been slow. Years of colonization, followed by decades of authoritarian leadership, left it with weak institutions and without strong democratic traditions. In 2006, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) identified poor governance as the key obstacle to the country's stability, democratic growth, and economic development. In response, the USAID Mission in Guinea developed an innovative strategy linking sectoral service delivery with good governance reforms. The Mission hypothesized that without governance reforms, other traditional development programs would be stunted in both their impact and their sustainability. Thus, from 2007 to 2013, RTI International implemented the *Multi-Sectoral Interventions to Advance Democratic Governance in Guinea* project, known commonly in French as *Faisons Ensemble* ("With Many"). *Faisons Ensemble* worked to improve both governance at the local level and the delivery of core services in health, education, agriculture, and natural resource management. The project adopted a collaborative approach to citizen–government relations, arguing that government and citizens have more to gain by working together than against each other. In effect, the approach nurtured the emergence of a mutual accountability ecosystem in which key stakeholders held each other accountable to work together to address priority issues.

This paper documents some of the results achieved by *Faisons Ensemble* and attempts to establish how governance impacts have contributed to improved service delivery. The research data described in this paper indicate changes in governance practices and improvements in service delivery in the targeted communes (local governments). Many citizens recognized a clear demarcation of "before" and "after." For example, project communes opened Council sessions to all key stakeholders and involved citizens in identifying local issues and priorities for development. In return, civil society actors supported the efforts of their local government and provided feedback on governance activities. In addition, service delivery improved in the targeted sectors as citizens began taking a more active role in oversight, and as government officials were trained in their roles and responsibilities. The research we highlight indicates that governance programs such as this one, which focused on promoting change at the community level, can achieve significant results even in the absence of a favorable national level enabling environment. It also demonstrates that approaches that focus on strengthening capacity and raising awareness—with a view to empowering local communities—can be effective. Lastly, *Faisons Ensemble* showed that every sector matters to the development of local communities. As stakeholders work together to promote broad-based development, they become increasingly aware of the interconnectedness of all the challenges they face.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Overview

From 2007 to 2013, RTI International implemented the *Multi-Sectoral Interventions to Advance Democratic Governance in Guinea* project, known commonly in French as *Faisons Ensemble* ("With Many"). This project was an initiative of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Guinea, which in 2006 had identified poor governance as the most significant obstacle to both the country's development and the ability to meet the basic needs of Guinean citizens. Thus, *Faisons Ensemble* implemented interventions to improve governance at the local level as well as the delivery of core services in health, education, and agriculture and natural resource management (NRM), sectors that have an impact on the daily life of Guinean citizens. *Faisons Ensemble* interventions worked to increase knowledge about roles and responsibilities among key stakeholders and focused on creating a collaborative environment in which all stakeholders and government officials would have strong incentives to become engaged and participate. Through these interventions, a system of mutual accountability was established in which all stakeholders had a role to play in promoting good governance and service delivery. In mid-2013, as the project was winding down, RTI fielded a research team[1] to investigate whether *Faisons Ensemble*'s governance interventions had led to improved sectoral outcomes; and if yes, what evidence could be extrapolated to support illuminate a causal link. This working paper reviews the findings from the team's visits to a subset of the assisted communes and draws lessons and recommendations for practitioners interested in implementing or designing multisectoral, community driven-governance programs.

Faisons Ensemble: Carrying Out an Ambitious USAID Strategy

In the mid-1990s, USAID recognized that a lack of accountability and poor governance were significantly hampering Guinea's development, as well as inhibiting the ability of citizens to improve their lives. Conversely, USAID also noted that, in a self-perpetuating cycle, poverty, lack of education, infrastructure, capacity, and information further constrained accountability.[2] The 2006 USAID Strategy Statement described Guinea as a "state of paradoxes." The potential for development and democratic governance existed through a sound Constitution and abundant natural resources, but corruption was rampant, and there was extreme poverty and general dissatisfaction with the government. Questions about the President's health furthered fears of instability. Guinea's corner of the world was dangerous; the surrounding countries were undergoing civil wars due in large part to similar problems.[3] Guinea was a fragile state.

To address these problems, the Mission developed an innovative strategy of putting governance at the heart of its interventions. In the Program Description for the *Multi-Sectoral Interventions to Advance Democratic Governance in Guinea* project, USAID proposed that:

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[1] The research team consisted of Christian Arandel (Lead Investigator), Dan Gerber (Project Chief of Party), and Babagale Camara, Agricultural Advisor to *Faisons Ensemble.*
[2] USAID, Guinea Country Strategic Plan, Fiscal Year 1998–2005, May 12, 1997, p. 51.
[3] USAID, Guinea Strategy Statement, February 14, 2006, p. 1.

Almost all of the present conditions that keep Guinea from progressing and make it vulnerable to instability flow from poor governance: endemic corruption, low economic growth, weak political and civil society institutions, inability or unwillingness to deliver effective public goods and essential services, lack of inclusiveness and dialogue, poor legal and regulatory frameworks, impunity, poverty, and a reticent yet resilient civil society. The hypothesis is that the main constraint to advances in economic growth, agriculture, NRM, health, and education is the poor performance of the government. Before USAID can have an impact on improved service delivery or improved livelihoods, it must address the governance constraints that impeded development in these areas. By increasing GOG capacity, accountability and efficiency, as well as strengthening civil society awareness of its rights and advocacy, USAID/Guinea will have a greater, longer lasting effect on its targeted sectors.[4]

USAID thus placed improved governance as the keystone of its program. Its sole Strategic Objective became: **Advance democratic governance through multi-sectoral interventions in health, education and agriculture/natural resource management.** In its 2007 proposal, RTI summarized the project philosophy as follows:

Our vision of the Multi-Sectoral Annual Program Statement (APS) is that by improving governance in health, education, and the agriculture and natural resource management sectors, the population will have improved services and will be more empowered. Effective implementation of the project will produce tangible results in sectoral areas of great importance to Guineans.

This strategy of placing governance at the center of sectoral interventions was and remains deeply innovative. Numerous development projects have added a governance dimension to otherwise predominantly technical and sectoral interventions. However, in most instances, this governance dimension is viewed as one additional means to help achieve the objectives of the project through better information and/or mobilization of the target population. It is rarely a central strategy for achieving those objectives.

Political and Implementation Context

Political Legacy

Guinea's legacy of authoritarianism and political crisis left it a chronically weak state with a history of instability and without strong democratic traditions. During focus groups and individual interviews, people often referred to the psychological legacy of living under dictatorships for 50 years. The research team was told

> *"No elected official will assert their rights; it's hard to do away with old ways of thinking. We need to place our trust in the new generation of communal professionals and elected officials who do not have the old way of thinking. We need to prepare a nursery for new leaders."*
> **Dixxin Innovation Circle Member, 2013**

numerous times that the generations that experienced the dictatorship could not shed their fear of the

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[4] USAID-Guinea, Annual Program Statement No. 675-06-06, *Multi-Sectoral Interventions to Advance Democratic Governance in Guinea*, October 2, 2006, p. 16.

hierarchy; that they were afraid to claim their rights or adopt new ways of doing things. This legacy can be traced to Sékou Touré, Guinea's first post-independence leader, who implemented a highly centralized one-party system under which corruption became rampant, human and political rights were repressed, and economic development faltered. His death was followed by a military coup led by Lansana Conté, who ruled from 1984 until his death in 2008. Upon taking office, Conté vowed to address human and political rights as well as improve economic development. Multi-party elections were eventually ushered in, but there were often irregularities, and over the course of his 24 years in office, corruption remained, political and human rights were abused, and economic growth continued to stagnate. Conté's death in 2008 was followed by a military coup, further hindering democratic growth. As Guinea's leaders focused on maintaining their grip on power, they neglected the urgent and difficult challenge of state building. As a result, the country's peripheries became marginalized: the further away from Conakry, the weaker the presence and effective reach of the state. The convergence of these two factors meant that it was very difficult for the state to implement reforms, as it lacked the capacity (and too often the willingness) to execute them. When President Alpha Condé was inaugurated on December 21, 2010, he declared that Guinea was a "country without a state."

Evolution of Decentralization Policies and Implementation

Guinea has a long history with decentralization, although it has often lacked the political will to implement and enforce reforms. At the end of 1985—a year into his first term—President Conté declared that decentralization would be a process to involve citizens in the management of state affairs and a tool to promote local economic development. Decentralization reforms were slowly ushered in that involved deconcentrating technical agents and responsibilities for local health centers to the local level. The reforms mandated the creation of Associations of Parents and Friends of Schools (*Associations des Parents d'Elèves et Amis de l'Ecole,* APEAE) to oversee schools, and the national forestry service began working with village-level Forest Management Committees (*Comités de Gestion de Forêt,* COGEF). Despite these efforts, governance reform stagnated. The massive training efforts that would be necessary to educate citizens and government officials on their new roles and responsibilities were not carried out.[5] In 2006, nearly 20 years after Guinea began its decentralization process, a USAID Fragile States Assessment (FAST) of Guinea found that the "deterioration of key public services" had reached such alarming proportions throughout the country that "state failures to fund, manage and support public service organizations, particularly in terms of staffing public schools with adequately trained and paid teachers, ensuring availability of common medicines (e.g., anti-malarials) and replacing aging infrastructure facilities" had imposed "considerable costs on Guinea's citizens."[6]

The year before USAID's 2006 FAST review, among growing political dissatisfaction, a series of governance reforms had been proposed and local elections were scheduled to be held. Proposed reforms included privatizing the media, revising the electoral lists, creating an independent electoral commission, revising the communal code to allow more autonomy, devolving more functions to the communes, and allowing freedom of movement for the opposition. However, even to date, no application decree of the

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[5] Robert Charlick and Hal Lippman, *Democracy and Governance and Cross-Sectoral Linkages: Guinea*. Working Paper No. 315. USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, April 1999, pp. 4–6. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnacg601.pdf
[6] USAID, *Fragile States Assessment: Guinea Results and Recommendations,* February 2006, pp. 14–15.

new code has been adopted; before *Faison Ensemble*'s intervention, the code had not been disseminated to the communes nor any meaningful awareness activities conducted, and the government continues to disregard many of its dispositions.

For example, the code gives communes the right to both own-source revenues and resources that are to be shared with the central government. Yet in many cases, commune own-resources continue to be collected by the central government and/or the communes do not receive their prescribed share of the revenues. The same applies to functions devolved to the communes: on paper, communes are responsible for 32 functions. In practice, however, many of these functions are still implemented by local representatives of the state, especially the prefectures. Furthermore, the code states that councilors will be elected for five-year terms, but the last elections were held in December 2005, or eight years ago—leaving many officials without a mandate or electoral legitimacy. The code contains dispositions for appointing Special Delegations to replace Councils that have committed crimes (article 80). These Special Delegations are expected to serve for no more than six months, until new elections are held (Article 105). The recent practice is quite different: the government appoints Special Delegations, especially in urban areas, for mostly political reasons and without official substantiation. Once appointed, the delegations stay in place in the absence of local elections. Of the country's 38 urban communes *(communes urbaines, CU),* 15 are now led by Special Delegations, while this is the case in only eight of the country's 304 rural communes *(communes rurales, CR).*

Implementation Challenges

It should therefore not come as a surprise that *Faisons Ensemble* found a pretty dire state of affairs when the project was launched in 2007. Communal officials had no or very limited knowledge of their roles and responsibilities and of how to manage a commune. Civil society organizations were, for the most part, fragmented and disorganized, and did not have a clear purpose of what they wanted to achieve. Few knew about the new communal code and even fewer knew its content. At the national level, the state was going through intense political changes, including a military coup in 2008, recovery from the coup, and then elections.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Research Objectives

As noted earlier, the data in this paper came from an August 2013 internal evaluation that was documented and incorporated into the December 2013 *Faisons Ensemble* final report to USAID. The first objective of the research effort was to supplement existing project data to better understand how the project's governance interventions had contributed to achieving sectoral outcomes through improved service delivery. The research focused on gathering and documenting the perspectives of the project's key stakeholders: elected and appointed communal officials and civil society representatives.

A secondary objective was to learn about project successes and limitations through the eyes of key stakeholders and to develop recommendations to submit to USAID for future assistance.

Research Question

The central research question was phrased as follows: Did *Faisons Ensemble* governance interventions lead to improved sectoral outcomes, and if yes, what evidence attests to the causal link? It is important to clarify that this research did not attempt to prove causality. Instead, the evaluation team collected evidence to help document the connections between improved governance and the project sectoral outcomes.

Research Methodology

Interviews and Focus Groups

The research conducted for this report used stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions to collect data. The interviews and focus groups were designed as follows:

- **Stakeholder interviews:** One-on-one interviews were conducted with key project stakeholders such as mayors or local civil society leaders. Interviews were open but followed interview guides.
- **Focus groups**: Focus groups were designed to bring together 10–12 local stakeholders who had participated in project activities. Discussions were to follow a focus group guide, but were open to allow for interactions among the participants.

The research design was quickly adapted to field conditions to allow all stakeholders to add their input. For example, as the evaluation team arrived in the village of Guéyafary (CR of Hèrèmakono) to hold the first focus group, the entire village came to greet the group, and everyone then entered the classroom where the meeting was to take place. In other communes, what was designed as interviews with selected actors quickly transformed into full-fledged focus group discussions, as new participants kept coming in. In the end, this appeared to matter little, as participants expressed themselves freely and without apparent self-censure even when the mayor or sub-prefectoral authorities sat nearby. Having a broad representation of key stakeholders in one place allowed the team to observe the dynamics between them and better understand what type of working relations they had developed over time. ***Exhibit 1*** presents the types of meetings that took place in each commune.

Exhibit 1: List of communes visited and meetings held

Commune	Type	Region	Interviews/focus groups held
Dixinn	Urban	Conakry	• Interview with mayor and selected officials • Focus group with "Innovation Circle"[7] and stakeholders
Kaloum	Urban	Conakry	• Interview with mayor and selected officials • Focus group with Innovation Circle and stakeholders
Hèrèmakono	Rural	Faranah	• Interview with agricultural advisor • Focus group with Innovation Circle and stakeholders • Focus group Guéyafary village stakeholders • Meeting with Health and Hygiene Committee[8]

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[7] Innovation Circles were *Faisons Ensemble*-supported venues for citizens and commune officials to jointly identify and solve local problems.

Commune	Type	Region	Interviews/focus groups held
Fermessadou	Rural	Faranah	• Meeting with Health and Hygiene Committee • Focus group with all stakeholders (mayor, elected officials, and civil society)
Cissela	Rural	Kankan	• Focus group with all stakeholders (mayor, elected officials, and civil society)
Bissikrima	Rural	Faranah	• Focus group with all stakeholders (mayor, elected, officials and civil society)
Dabola	Urban	Faranah	• Focus group with Innovation Circle and stakeholders • Interview with mayor and selected officials • Meeting with Health and Hygiene Committee
Dogomet	Rural	Faranah	• Impromptu interview with General Secretary
Lafou	Rural	Labé	• Focus group with all stakeholders (mayor, elected officials, and civil society)
Labé	Urban	Labé	• Focus group with all stakeholders (mayor, elected officials, and civil society)

Commune Selection

Faisons Ensemble divided its partner communes into three categories during implementation:

- **Beacon communes** were the project's best-performing communes. Their performance was rewarded through more intensive project support (both governance and sectoral interventions). A key mission for these communes is to share their successes with other communes and be an inspiration for them. There were 30 Beacon communes.
- **Champion communes** received regular but less comprehensive *Faisons Ensemble* support through implementing nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners; the project collected data on their performance (145 communes).
- The remaining communes were reached indirectly via intermediary organizations such as the National Association of Guinean Communes (*Association Nationale des Communes du Guinée,* ANCG) (167 communes).

Given that the aim of the research was not to conduct a thorough evaluation of the project, but to gather evidence demonstrating how governance outcomes may have led to sectoral outcomes, and given the time and resource constraints, the evaluators opted to include only Beacon communes in the study. Doing so meant selecting communes in which a critical mass of interventions, both sectoral and governance, had taken place. It would have been impossible to include more than one or two Champion or indirectly reached communes, which would have been insufficient to establish any kind of pattern. Among the 10 Beacon communes selected, two were in Labé Region (Labé and Lafou) where *Faisons Ensemble* interventions had been implemented for six months or less, to obtain a snapshot of communes at an early stage. While this survey did not constitute a true baseline analysis, it yielded insights into the

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[8] The Health and Hygiene Committee (*Comité de Santé et d'Hygiène,* CSH) structure replaced the previous structure called the Health Management Committee (*Comité de Gestion de Santé,* COGES). Unlike the COGES, the CSH has a tighter connection with the Council, with the mayor or a deputy mayor serving as president of the committee.

problems of communes with a limited history of program support. The group also made one impromptu visit to the rural commune of Dogomet, which was a Beacon but had been downgraded to the Champion level after a review of its performance. The site selection process aimed to incorporate both urban (4) and rural communes (6) and to cover different regions of the country to account for the diverse levels of development, culture, and socioeconomic conditions in Guinea. The complete list of communes can be found in Exhibit 1 above.

Faisons Ensemble: Theory of Change and Main Interventions

Theory of Change

Faisons Ensemble's theory of change hypothesized that interventions which increased key stakeholder knowledge about roles and responsibilities could catalyze actions on community-identified priorities in governance and the targeted sectors, through citizen–government collaboration and innovation. Simultaneously, *Faisons Ensemble* worked to leverage results to support learning; replication of experience; advocacy; sustainable change in attitudes, organizations, and institutions; and the policies and practices that support good governance and quality public services. This theory of change is represented in *Exhibit 2.*

Interventions

Exhibit 3 describes in detail the key *Faisons Ensemble* interventions, indicating their purpose, how they were used, and which sector they focused on.

Exhibit 2: *Faisons Ensemble* theory of change

Exhibit 3: *Faisons Ensemble* main interventions and tools

Intervention	Sector	Tool(s)	Description
Communal Capacity-Strengthening Activities	Governance	*Communal development framework (Cadre du Développement Municipal, CDM)*	A collaborative self-assessment tool to evaluate and monitor government capacity and performance in service delivery and institutional development
		Communal Performance Improvement Plans	Specific plans developed to address communal performance gaps as identified in the CDM
		Local socioeconomic diagnostic (Diagnostic Socio-économique Local, DSEL)	Analyzed socio-economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in a commune to identify development priorities
		Audits of communes	Administrative, financial, and procurement compliance audits implemented jointly with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (*Ministère de l'Administration du Territoire et de la Décentralisation,* MATD)

Intervention	Sector	Tool(s)	Description
Nongovermental and Civil Society Organization (NGO/CSO) Capacity-Development Activities	Governance	*Assessment questionnaire, workshop guidelines and Rapid Organizational Assessment (Évaluation Rapide Organisationnelle, ERO)*	Allowed stakeholders of an NGO to analyze their strengths and weaknesses in seven functional areas
		NGO/CSO capacity-development plans	Used the tools described above to develop a capacity-strengthening plan for NGOs
		Audits of NGOs	Professional firm conducted audits to assess and check financial and administrative functioning of partners
		Small grants to NGOs	Strengthened NGOs by funding activities in support of project initiatives
Support to Sectoral Governance and Oversight Entities	Education and governance		Assisted in strengthening Associations of Parents and Friends of the School (*Associations des Parents d'Elevés et Amis de l'Ecole,* APEAE)
	Health and governance		Capacity-building assistance to Health and Hygiene Committees *(Comités de Santé et d'Hygiène,* CSH)
	Agriculture and natural resource management, and governance		Capacity-building assistance to Forest Management Committees *(Comités des Gestion de Forêt,* COGEF) and Bush Fire Prevention Groups to increase their ability to access services
Support to Citizen Engagement	Governance	*Social audit tools*	Supported civil society efforts to assess government performance and hold communes accountable
	Health	*Mystery clients*	Used for HIV/AIDS voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) control; conducted by NGOs supporting people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)
	Cross-sectoral	*Innovation Circles*	Brought together stakeholders to address priority CR/CU needs and issues. This included mobilizing resources, solving problems with schools, improving access to water, increasing agriculture production, etc.
Gender Awareness and Mainstreaming	Cross-sectoral	*Trainings and assessments*	Gender sensitivity trainings and self-assessments allowed individuals and organizations to appraise their level of gender awareness
	Cross-sectoral	*Literacy training*	Literacy training for women with good governance messages
Conflict Prevention	Governance	*Community meetings*	Brought together key stakeholders to discuss issues and clear up rumors
		Community-focused youth campaigns	Through song competitions, football matches, etc., focused on promoting alternatives to conflict.
Targeted Technical Assistance	Cross-sectoral	*Coaching*	Periodic and regular support by regionally based staff to key government and NGO stakeholders with focus on governance, health, education, and agriculture and NRM
	Governance	*Short-term technical assistance*	Expertise to address specific issues of civil society and government partners
Training Program	Governance	*Training module development, training of trainers, and training events*	Modules for elected officials, deconcentrated technical service (DTS) agents, and others on topics including internal governance, financial management, social auditing and the fight against corruption, management and functioning of local government *(collectivités)* public procurement, gender equity, conflict prevention and management, participatory monitoring and evaluation
	Agriculture and natural resource management	*Training module development, training of trainers, and training events*	Training on small farm management, production and promotion of community seed banks, rural extension and adult education, governance and organizations of community-based organizations (CBOs), land and NRM, mapping of community forests

Intervention	Sector	Tool(s)	Description
	Education	*Training module development, training of trainers, and training events*	Training on public expenditures and good governance, education management, leadership in the education sector; training of teachers in revised curriculum, the school code of conduct
	Health	*Training module development, training of trainers, and training events*	Training manual in obstetric and neonatal emergency care, training module on food hygiene, revision of the training curriculum and course workbook for the *École Nationale de Santé de Kindia*, trainings on integrated management of newborn and childhood disease, and health center management
	Cross-sectoral	*Training module development, training of trainers, and training events*	Training to CBOs to improve organizational performance, efficiently manage resources, identify key areas to influence democratic governance
Peer-to-Peer Exchanges of Best Practices	Cross-sectoral	*Study tours*	Enabled decision-makers to see best practices from other countries in health, education, decentralization, and local development
		Sponsored local exchanges	Allowed CSO, CRs/CUs, and DTS agents to get first-hand exposure to Guinean successes
		Good-governance innovation fairs	1- to 2-day sponsored events that provided an opportunity for communes to showcase their successes and others to learn about their initiatives
Information Dissemination	Cross-sectoral	*Radio/TV programming, road shows, concerts, music, theater*	Spot announcements, interactive exchanges, interviews, and information announcements to broadcast messages on key issues, mobilize, and raise awareness
		Calendars, posters, storyboards, cartoons	Disseminated key messages
		Documentation publication, booklets, Tip Sheets	Provided texts, laws, guides and summaries in French and local languages. Spread best practices and information on critical issues. 2-pagers contained practical tips on issues such as resource mobilization
		Focus group discussions	Allowed understanding of various texts, laws and issues

Governance-related interventions focused on strengthening government officials', citizens', and service providers' abilities to fulfill their roles, work together, and hold each other accountable. They did not place the onus on a single actor, but instead transferred knowledge and skills to allow everyone to become engaged. These interventions gave local government officials information about relevant laws, as well as their roles and responsibilities. This included disseminating laws; performing diagnostics on commune performance and service delivery; promoting gender equity; and leading participatory planning aimed at increasing citizen awareness, participation, and oversight, as well as strengthening civil society and community-based organizations. Highlights included creating Innovation Circles for citizens to engage with commune officials to develop and solve local problems, increasing citizen awareness about the roles and responsibilities of their elected officials, offering literacy training for women, and sharing improvements across communes.

Sectoral interventions focused on improving service delivery and citizen oversight. Health activities included support to voluntary counseling and treatment centers to improve their services; training for health personnel on roles and responsibilities of Health Management Committees; and practical training in health care. In education, *Faisons Ensemble* worked with secondary school directors in management, helped to establish school development committees and student organizations, and publicized a code of school conduct. In the agriculture sector, the project helped to develop Scopes of Work for extension agents, organized orientation workshops for the agents in collaborative information-

gathering technologies, and provided trainings to build their capacity to provide personalized and high-level technical, management, and material support to farmers.

Exhibit 4 demonstrates the results that can occur when interventions target all aspects of communal life, including strengthening governance processes, delivering services, and improving the relationship between elected officials and citizens to solve commune problems.

Exhibit 4: Case study: Fermessadou, Beacon commune

Fermessadou received intensive assistance that focused on improving both governance and service delivery. Highlights of the changes in the commune's operations included the opening of Council sessions to the public; posting of fees, budgets, and Council decisions; social audits; and monthly meetings with service providers to discuss challenges and solutions to problems in the commune. Of the audits, according to the mayor, "*As soon as we did this we knew we needed to do this to improve. And we saw we needed to do this together. This is where you help Fermessadou—a lot is with harmony. So we organized extraordinary communal sessions with the themes of criticism and self-criticism.*"

Work targeting **health services** resulted in the posting of fees in the health center, improved management of drug procurement and supplies, and the building of a new health center that was financed by the commune and local associations. The mayor noted that, *"in **public health**, after multiple visits by the* Faisons Ensemble *Project we saw the real need to publicize the quarterly receipts of the health center….Before the Prefectoral Health Director managed our funds but now the Council, as its 32nd duty, is supposed to manage the health centers. Now we ourselves help finance (medical) products. Now the **Health Committee** manages the funds and the funds are kept in a bank. Now the **Health and Hygiene Committee** and **Innovation Circle** came to lobby for assistance to the health center."*

In the **education sector**, an **APEAE** was created, leading to community-based management of schools, improved recruitment of teachers, and better learning conditions such as the repair of school benches. By way of implementing a system of mutual accountability, every three months the APEAE was being evaluated by the commune. There was also more transparency in the management of school funds. Money used to be split among the teachers as non-reimbursable loans.

In **agriculture** and **natural resource management**, farmers' associations became officially recognized and the commune collaborated with the agricultural advisor. A communal seed bank was created, rice yields increased, and the association helped to finance road improvements. In addition, a tree-planting program was implemented, financed in part by a newly disclosed government transfer.

According to the mayor, "*the* Faisons Ensemble *project is the biggest Somono (fishermen) of our partners. Why do I call it a Somono? The others came and had fish and gave us some.* Faisons Ensemble *came and the first time gave us some fish but then they knew this cannot continue so they showed us how to fish."*

KEY FINDINGS

The main findings of the research are presented in summary form in *Appendix A.* What follows is an analysis of the key trends that the evaluation research team observed.

Did *Faisons Ensemble* interventions lead to improved governance?

Governance Impact Analysis

The results of the data collection indicated that governance practices were significantly impacted by *Faisons Ensemble* governance interventions, in all of the Beacon communes visited. For many of the participants, there was a clear demarcation between "before" and "after" *Faisons Ensemble*. This in itself

is not surprising: communes were identified as Beacons precisely because they had achieved the most progress, with project support. What came as a surprise to the investigators was the depth of the change in attitudes that had accompanied those governance improvements. Below we quickly explore these by focusing on three core dimensions of good governance: transparency, participation and collaboration, and accountability.

> *"What is fundamental is work and honesty. The main difficulty we face is corruption. I want to know where corruption is; I want to know if myself I am corrupt. We can work and do a lot, but if people do not know what corruption is there will be no progress."*
> **District President and APEAE President, Lafou**

Transparency

Faisons Ensemble's progress reports to USAID often included pictures of postings that could be found in communal halls or health center waiting rooms. They showed information such as the commune's budget, service fees, or decisions of the communal Council. In a country with high illiteracy rates, such efforts could easily be interpreted as empty gestures to satisfy donor expectations. However, the evaluators found that the postings reflected a deeper change in the attitudes of communal officials. In the urban commune of Kaloum, the chief of cadastral service gave a vivid account of his, and his staff's, initial reluctance to post information on revenues from his service. It took a lot of pressure for him and his staff to agree to post the information. They felt that the information was not for everyone to see and also had a sense of a loss of power as they gave it up. For a while, his staff would, on their own initiative, regularly remove the postings as a sign of protest. Nonetheless, nearly all communes eventually adopted new measures to keep the population informed of communal affairs. Other means included:

> *"What I have learned since the beginning of Faisons Ensemble is greater than all I have learned over the past five years. It has enabled me to improve relations with citizens and change my behavior. Before, we worked with our back turned on each other. Now, we have understood that we cannot act alone."*
> **Vice Mayor, Lafou**

- opening Council session to citizen (all communes),
- live broadcasting of the Council sessions on the radio (Bissikrima),
- reporting on communal proceedings in the communal districts (nearly all communes).

More significant was the opening of selected communes to audits, either internal or social auditing conducted by civil society structures. Finally, every commune visited indicated that they now respected formal public procurement procedures and had ended *gré à gré* (person-to-person contracting) practices.

Participation and collaboration

Focus group participants and interviewees consistently reported that prior to the project's interventions, their communes had not carried out consistent or meaningful efforts to encourage citizen participation and collaboration among stakeholders. Asked about the current situation, many gave examples of how the communes were now involving civil society representatives in key decisions, including adopting of the budget and preparing and monitoring local development plans. Civil society and communes also

> *"The commune does nothing without consulting with civil society. Civil society knows annual budget previsions; how much was collected and what remains to be collected, and we are involved in the process. Now they [the population] see what they give and where it goes."*
> **President of civil society organization and member of the Bissikrima Innovation Circle**

collaborated to finance community structures, such as building a youth house and a school in Hèrèmakono, or constructing a health center in Fermessadou. Collaboration also improved between deconcentrated technical services (agricultural advisors and Forest and Water officials) and the communes. Before the project interventions, these officials would report only to the prefecture or to the sub-prefecture. They rarely consulted with communal officials.

Accountability

The findings all pointed to the increased accountability of communal officials to citizens. Respondents in nearly all communes indicated that the Council reported to citizens on budget implementation. In Lafou, a commune that received support only near the end of *Faisons Ensemble*, this new openness was a clear source of concern for officials. With their

> *"Before, the verdict was bitter. Each structure was isolated and there was no synergy between the structures. Nobody knew who did what and where.* Faisons Ensemble, *through consultations and training, has helped create this synergy."*
> ***President of Innovation Circle, Dabola***

limited means and limited success in collecting taxes, they were afraid they would not be able to meet their commitments and that they would be held accountable for it. This concern was not expressed in communes that had been with the project for a longer time. To the contrary, they noted with pride that their openness and willingness to be held accountable led to an increase in tax collections.

Critical Governance Interventions

Through discussions with the stakeholders, some *Faisons Ensemble* interventions emerged as critical to achieving project outcomes:

- **Dissemination and training on the local government code:** Few communal officials knew what functions had been devolved to the commune under the code. Learning about the code empowered the elected officials to assert their rights to perform the functions that had been devolved to them. They also gained a better understanding of their roles in sectoral service delivery.
- **Creation of Innovation Circles:** These voluntary structures—composed of civil society representatives, elected officials, and civil servants—provided a mechanism for consulting with citizens. Beacon communes adopted the concept and tailored it to their needs. The circles often became an extension of the commune and provided the support needed to implement the commune's activities. Typically the first activity of the circle mentioned by stakeholders was to help with tax and fee collection. Members helped to identify new sources of revenue and sensitize citizens about the need to pay taxes and fees.
- **Exchanges of experiences:** Every commune mentioned benefiting from opportunities to share experiences (fairs, field visits, project literature). Peer-to-peer learning proved to be a powerful means to encourage the emulation and spread of locally developed good practices, and communes consistently requested more opportunities to exchange with peers.

  > *"Hats off for resource mobilization! They* [Faisons Ensemble] *have made us think to see where we can get revenue. During the dry season transporters store construction material in the commune: that's a source of revenue that we can tap into! Vendors in public space: they must pay!"*
  > ***Mayor, Bissikrima***

- **Training:** Training offered by *Faisons Ensemble* was well received by the communes and often seen as eye opening. Procurement training was among

the modules that had the most impact and led to a change in practices.

- **Training in tax collection and resource mobilization:** Nearly all Beacon communes indicated that they had seen improvements in tax collection rates. They credited this result to (1) the training they had received that helped them identify potential sources of revenue; (2) the support of the Innovation Circle in mobilizing revenues; and (3) the increased trust between citizens and the communes. The mayor of Hèrèmakono specifically noted that the increased transparency in communal affairs led to an upsurge of funding from expatriates from the commune.

Impact Limitations

Participants noted a number of insufficiencies in *Faisons Ensemble* interventions. The main limitations are presented below. Some could have been addressed by the project and others fell outside of its scope.

- **Relationship with the prefectoral level:** While the *Faisons Ensemble* governance model worked well at the communal level, it was less successful at changing relations between the communes and the next higher levels of government, such as the prefecture or the governorate. Relations typically remained tense with the prefecture, with sore points regarding clarification of roles and attribution; transparent transfer of shared revenues and government subsidies; and the overall lack of effectiveness of prefectoral authorities. However, numerous communes mentioned that relations with the prefecture improved somewhat when they were able to clarify roles. This improvement was particularly noticeable at the sub-prefectoral level. Sub-prefects and mayors often shared the same physical space and were working in the same territory. This has may have provided an incentive to improve their collaboration. Many sub-prefects attended the evaluation meetings and appeared to be just "part of the team."

    – *Training for prefects:* Several stakeholders (including a sub-prefect) noted that *Faisons Ensemble* should have done more to include prefectoral authorities in training sessions. Commune officials indicated that they now knew more about decentralization than the prefects, which hampered their efforts to reach all of their goals. The situation in Conakry was the most severe, with the president of the urban commune of Kaloum noting that they were being "annihilated" by the governorate, which left them no space to make a meaningful impact.

      > *"Through good governance we learned that women are equal to men. The first result [of* Faisons Ensemble*] it's the spirit [way of thinking]; that's the most important because it will remain."*
      > **Woman civil society leader, Bissikrima**

    – *Limited support at the national level:* It is important to note that due to the coup d'état in December 2008, project support was suspended to the central government and did not resume until May 2011. This hindered the ability of the project to strengthen and work with all levels of government, which—as noted above—often created a dichotomy in which local government officials were more informed about their role and responsibilities than prefectoral or national-level officials.

- **Literacy for improved governance and women's empowerment:** Women in the communes who no longer benefited from "literacy for governance" activities expressed strong regrets that

the project had stopped these interventions.[9] They noted that this training was critical in helping them manage and lead their organizations and become more respected in the community. One woman in the village of Guéyafary, who had benefited from the literacy training, felt so strongly about it that she continued providing literacy courses to the village's women during the dry season.

- **Chronic underequipping of communes:** Most of Guinea's rural communes were poorly resourced, with no computer, printer, photocopier, or independent means of transportation. The most modern piece of equipment typically was an old manual typewriter. Equipping communes was not a mandate of *Faisons Ensemble* (for a number of good reasons); however, as the communes improved their performance and demonstrated their willingness to work with citizens to promote local development, their effectiveness was hampered by lack of means. When communal officials from Lafou had to drive two hours to Labé to photocopy a document, they obviously were not spending that time working directly for the welfare of the commune.

Did *Faisons Ensemble* interventions improve delivery of basic services? If yes, can those be attributed in part to improved governance?

In this section, we review the evidence of sectoral changes from all the project interventions and then explain how we determined from the research data whether the governance interventions (both those targeting sectors and those described above targeting the commune more broadly) enhanced service delivery.

Health Sector

Key impacts

Faisons Ensemble support in the health sector focused on improving service delivery in communal health centers and supporting 34 HIV/AIDS voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) facilities. All of the visited communes benefited from health center support and three (Dixinn, Kaloum, and Dabola) had VCT centers. During the field research, the evaluation team visited one VCT facility that was very well managed (Dabola) and obtained testimony about the Dixinn facility. Feedback from both indicated improvements in the services provided, especially around the key issues of confidentiality and referral of HIV-positive patients. In Dabola, facility staff indicated that they improved their outreach programs to the commune districts. The visit to the site attested to a well-managed operation where key statistics on performance were collected and analyzed.

Faisons Ensemble devoted significant resources to training the members of the Health and Hygiene Committees that were created in 2011 to oversee communal health centers and district health posts. The committees include representatives of the commune governments and civil society. Strong evidence emerged that the training resulted in marked improvements in the services provided in the centers. The first, and maybe most significant change, as reported by respondents, was that fees for services and medication were now posted in nearly all of the centers in the communes visited (the exception was Lafou, which began receiving the project interventions only shortly before the evaluation).

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[9] The project's literacy work was significantly reduced in response to diminished project funding during the last two extensions: October 2011–March 2012 and April 2012–September 2013.

Testimonies were all in agreement that this ended the practice of overcharging patients for drugs. Committee members indicated that the staff working at the reception desk made an effort to ensure that illiterate patients were informed of the tariffs. In Hèrèmakono, members of the committee indicated that patients now waited in turn and that the number of patient visits to the center had increased (although documented statistics were not provided). Service improvements also included financing of midwives by the commune, improvements in drug supplies, better outreach efforts to citizens, improved attendance of health center personnel, and the renovation of two health centers in Kaloum and Dabola with support from the commune.

Governance and improved health service delivery: Participants in focus groups and interviews repeatedly attributed the improvements in health center services to the improved oversight of the health committees, which were empowered to impose greater transparency in the management of health centers.

"Faisons Ensemble, it's good for the poor."
Citizen, Hèremakono

Most committees indicated that they now accompanied the doctor to the central pharmacy to procure drugs (Hèrèmakono was an exception), they monitored the centers' revenues and ensured that collected funds were remitted in full; and they raised staff awareness about treating patients respectfully and ensuring their privacy. Health committees also had learned to lobby and work closely with the commune. They had obtained communal contributions toward renovations, birthing services, and—in some cases—purchased equipment. Through the committee, whose president was always one of the Council members, the commune could oversee the functioning of the health centers and was becoming more aware of its role in health service delivery. The "it's good for the poor" quote cited above was uttered several times by a self-described ordinary citizen in Hèrèmakono in direct reference to the fact that health center fees were now posted and that, as a result, the poor no longer paid arbitrary fees. This was real-life testimony as to how improved governance can have a very direct, positive impact on people's lives. The health center quote at right sums up an often-expressed sentiment of ownership over health centers, explaining why the committees took their oversight roles so seriously.

"Faisons Ensemble told us that the health center belonged to us."
Woman member of the Health and Hygiene Committee, Dabola

During the field research, the evaluation team visited only one HIV/AIDS VCT facility—at a prefectoral hospital that had no oversight from health committees. We are thus not in a position to establish a link between governance intervention and improved services. However, we note that for VCT centers run by health centers, we can assume that the greater oversight of the health committees also had an impact on their management, as it did on the broader management of health centers with no VCT services. In addition, the project supported a number of governance interventions to help improve the VCT center services. For example, the project worked with NGOs supporting people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Agents from the PLWHA NGOs went undercover to VCT centers and acted as regular clients to check on services. These "mystery client" reports went back to the VCT centers as feedback on their performance. This stakeholder civil society control of government services was credited with improving services at the centers. In the one VCT facility that the evaluators visited, the hospital director also stated that they worked closely with PLWHA NGOs to help orient and support patients diagnosed as HIV-positive. Once the CSH became involved in overseeing the VCT testing supplies,

equipment, and other materials, there was less pilfering of these by the VCT/health center staff. The *Faisons Ensemble* project staff documented these impacts in several success stories.

Health sector limitations

Even with the contributions of *Faisons Ensemble,* community oversight of health centers likely will remain an ongoing challenge. While the improvements were remarkable, some health committees were still struggling to impose full transparency. In Dabola, the health committee was hesitant to publish fees for drugs, as those are determined by the state and fluctuate. In addition, they found that conveying accurate information to the population could be challenging. In Dabola, *Faisons Ensemble* agents informed the population that malarial treatment drugs were free, which led patients to believe that the full treatment was free, which was not true; other drugs needed for the treatment (like acetaminophen) were fee-based. In Hèrèmakono, the health committee was hesitant to demand full accountability from the doctor and could not explain exactly how the doctor used the center's funds to pay for birthing services. The difference in status between the doctor and the members of the health committee was most likely largely responsible for this reluctance. Finally, the lack of equipment at health centers was glaring. Some health centers had no blood pressure meters, the birthing rooms visited were rudimentary at best, and one center had no room to treat injured patients, who had to be bandaged outside the center. The lack of basic equipment and infrastructure clearly was an impediment to improving health services.

Education Sector

Education impacts

Faisons Ensemble interventions in the education sector included training support to the APEAE. During the first three years of the project, *Faisons Ensemble* also provided some micro-grants to fund school improvements. While these structures are mandated by law, they are not always set up or democratically run. Most of the focus groups included members of the APEAE as well as parents who had their children in the school system. Impacts documented through the meetings included: building and/or renovation of schools; improved school equipment (especially benches); improved teacher recruitment and oversight; better attendance by schoolchildren and a decrease in dropout rates (especially for girls); improved preparedness of children to attend school (improved hygiene, better equipment); and improved overall education quality (at least a perception that it had improved). Two communes backed up the last claim by providing evidence of impressive graduation rates: In Hèrèmakono in 2012, 53 out of 60 pupils graduated from primary to secondary school (less than 10 did before) and 28 of 38 students passed their *Brevet*[10] (only a handful did before). Dabola officials proudly reported a 100% success rate for the Baccalaureate[11] in 2011 and 2013.

Governance and improved education service delivery: As noted above, the main interventions conducted by *Faisons Ensemble* in the education sector had a governance focus. Yet, again and again, focus group participants attributed the improvements to better school governance and credited *Faisons Ensemble* for the change. The school management quote provided below is typical of the reactions observed in the focus groups. The evaluation team was told that before the creation of the APEAE and

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[10] The *Brevet d'etudes du premier cycle* is a national examination that 10th graders must pass in order to move up to the next grade.

[11] The *Baccalauréat* examination is given in two parts, at the end of the second and third years of secondary school.

project involvement, the directors managed the schools like personal fiefdoms, without any involvement from the community. It did not even occur to members of the community that they had a right to intervene and oversee school management. Focus group participants credited a newly gained awareness with much of the progress that

"[Before] the community knew nothing about school management, it did not have a role. We have learned how to manage the school. [Now] The community is deeply involved, we monitor everything including the attendance of teachers and students."
APEAE representative, Dabola

took place in their communities' schools. The facilitators were told that the APEAEs were now overseeing the management of parent contributions to the school to ensure that they were used for their intended purposes; they developed school improvements plans and were raising funds (from the communes and parents) to implement them; and they monitored attendance of children and teachers. APEAE successes included:

- Ending the practice of renting out children to conduct menial tasks for the teachers, in lieu of fee payment (Cissela)
- Improving parents' awareness of the importance of timeliness, personal hygiene, and basic equipment (bags, pens) to promote good learning conditions (Cissela, Dabola)
- Limiting the practice of child expulsions from school (Dabola)
- Encouraging parents to keep their children in school, leading to a decrease in delinquency rates (all communes except Lafou and Labé).

One woman who was the treasurer (and previously president) of the Dabola APEAE related a success story. She was informed that the parents of two bright twin sisters had decided to marry off the girls before they could complete high school. After one of the girls asked for her help, the woman went to talk to the parents and persuaded them to let the girls finish their schooling even though all was ready for the imminent wedding. She ended her story by saying "*All of this is thanks to Faisons Ensemble training.*" This was eloquent testimony as to how the *Faisons Ensemble* governance-focused intervention helped empower her to become a civic leader who had made a difference in the life of her community.

Limitations in education

The empowerment of APEAE and communities to oversee the education of their children remained an ongoing struggle. To clarify: Communities came together with limited means. They contracted with teachers to come and teach their children. There was little control over the qualifications of these teachers and the requirements were low. Parents could not always honor their side of the contract, which meant that teachers could walk out until they were paid, or leave the commune altogether. All of this points to the fact that community involvement in the management of schools is a critical but insufficient ingredient to educational improvement in Guinea.

Agricultural Sector

Impacts in agriculture

Project interventions in this sector were relatively limited and took place in five of the 10 communes visited. These interventions included micro-grants to finance agricultural inputs (rolling funds); technical training to agricultural advisors; and capacity building for farmers' associations. A number of

"Before [Faisons Ensemble], I did not know my job. I did not have the competencies."
Agricultural advisor, Hèrèmakono

impacts of these interventions were documented through the focus groups and one individual interview with an agricultural advisor. They included adoption of improved rice planting techniques and better seeds, yielding increased rice production in most communes visited (in Hèrèmakono, the agricultural advisor indicated that yields had increased from 800 ton per hectare to 2,500 tons per hectare); rural road improvements; the creation of communal seed banks and crop storage facilities; increased vaccination of cattle (Cissela only); improved access to phytosanitary (disease-free plant) products for breeders; and increased knowledge about preserving fruit and vegetables.

Governance and improved service delivery in agriculture: The link between improved agricultural services and outputs was not as intuitive as the link between governance and improved education. While changes in agricultural productivity were directly tied to technical interventions, they also required farmers and rural communities to change their behavior so they could adopt new techniques and concepts. During the research, the evaluation team found credible evidence that governance had contributed in a tangible way to agricultural outcomes, as described below.

- **The role of the agricultural advisor was transformed:** The role of this advisor used to focus on disseminating new crops and techniques resulting from research. *Faisons Ensemble* helped to transform this role so that the advisors could see themselves as local facilitators of development who looked at the full range of agricultural practices (not just one crop) and supported farmers' efforts to structure themselves into formal associations with clear objectives. As a result of this role, the advisors gained stature in the community and were sought after by farmers.
- **The communes became more involved in supporting agriculture and working closely with the agricultural advisors:** The advisors interviewed or present in the meetings indicated that previously they did not even visit communal officials and reported only through their ministry's hierarchy. Involving communal officials was an important step toward ensuring that interventions reach would more farmers. Communes also supported requests by associations to become formally registered and obtain official status. Finally, communes helped solve conflicts between livestock breeders and farmers. In Fermessadou, the commune began mediating disputes to get the parties to agree to a fair compensation when animals destroyed crops. The commune also received remuneration for the effort.
- **Farmers' associations** *(groupements)* **became more formally organized and structured:** The *groupements* played a critical role in disseminating new practices and in advocating for farmers' interests. They obtained information about when critical agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizer) were being distributed by the government and advocated on behalf of their members to make sure they received their fair share. In Fermessadou, the association contributed to the construction of a new health center and to road improvements, and the farmers' association built a community granary to preserve seeds and crops.

Limitations in agriculture

The role of the communes in promoting improved agricultural practices remained limited. While they facilitated the interventions of agricultural advisors and supported farmers' associations, they had inadequate means to intervene directly in the sector. As of 2014, there are still too few agricultural advisors to cover the entire territory of rural communes where these villages are dispersed. During the

evaluation, no cases emerged in which a commune was able to address this issue to ensure that all its villages would benefit from extension services. Furthermore, in most regions (Labé may be an exception), farmers' associations remain fragmented, with few effective efforts to federate them so they can gain more influence. Associations are typically created to exploit a shared parcel of land, and only the farmers who own a share of the parcel can benefit.

Natural Resource Management

Natural resource management impacts

The project's efforts to promote improved natural resource management concentrated on supporting 41 COGEFs in 14 project-affiliated communes that had community forests. Among the communes visited, five had benefited from *Faisons Ensemble* interventions in this sector. These consisted primarily of training on capacity development of their community-based organization (CBO) and community management of forests. Also, the project trained producers, lumbermen, hunters, livestock herders, fishermen, artisans, traditional medicine workers, and others on their roles and responsibilities on the management of the forest. RTI's research documented impacts of the program in two rural communes: Hèrèmakono and Bissikrima. In Hèrèmakano, the COGEF appeared to have had some important impacts toward promoting community ownership over community forests, especially in the village of Guéyafary. In that village, the community agreed to stop all wood cutting in the community forest and it appeared that this decision had been respected. The forest management advisor helped delineate the boundaries of the forest and the community initiated a replanting program. In the quote at right, the Village Chief was expressing his pride in the fact the forest was no longer destroyed by the bush fires *(feux de brousse)* that tend to mar rural communes in Guinea during the dry season. The village of Hèrèmakono seemed to have achieved a more limited impact with its

> *"The fire did not come into the forest this year; it will not come in next year. I pledge that the fire will no longer come into the forest."*
> **Guéyafari Village Chief**

program, as the mayor noted that the forest was still being damaged by fire and the village had not achieved its replanting objectives. The commune of Bissikrima also benefited from project support and reported that illegal logging no longer takes place in that the communal forest. Its representatives told a previously documented story in which an illegal logger was forced to leave his cut timber with the commune, and the commune sold it and used the proceeds to build a school. A related impact was the introduction of improved cook stoves. These consumed far less wood than the traditional cook stoves, resulting in both an improvement in women's living conditions and less wood chopping.

Governance and natural resource management service delivery: Most of the interventions in this sector had a strong governance dimension: capacity building to improve the management and representativeness of the COGEFs; support to the forestry advisor in reaching out to the communities; and community mobilization around forest protection. In both Hèrèmakono and Bissikrima, the commune became deeply involved in protecting the forests and achieved measurable progress in doing so.

Limitations in natural resource management

While *Faisons Ensemble* interventions had a positive impact in protecting community forests, they did not address related issues that have a clear impact on this sector. This was particularly the case with the setting of bush fires, a traditional practice perpetuated by hunters in the dry season, to drive out

game and facilitate forest access. These fires have a devastating impact on vegetation and showed no sign of abating in any of the visited communes.

LINKING FINDINGS TO *FAISONS ENSEMBLE*'S THEORY OF CHANGE

Summary Analysis

The findings described in this paper give credence to the theory of change that guided *Faisons Ensemble* interventions (see Exhibit 2 above). The evaluation team found that citizens and government collaboration did produce innovative local responses which yielded improvements in service delivery. They have also found evidence that peer-to-peer exchanges led to changes in practices at the local level. This, in turn, yielded measurable improvements in service delivery.

However, the evaluation's findings also revealed that the causal chain underlying the project's theory of change remained only partially fulfilled. *Faisons Ensemble* interventions to improve the country's enabling environment for improved local governance and service delivery had more limited results. The project did identify and support good governance champions in various ministries and this allowed for some success. For example, the project's work with the National Agency for Rural Development and Advisory Services *(Agence Nationale pour la Promotion Rural et le Conseil Agricole,* ANPROCA) helped bring about the change noted above in the role of the agricultural advisors, and thus helped improve their effectiveness. *Faisons Ensemble* also worked closely with good-governance champions within the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (*Ministère de l'Administration du Territoire et de la Décentralisation,* MATD) and supported its initiatives. These champions contributed to the development of a decentralization policy (*Lettre de Politique Nationale de Décentralisation et de Développement Local*[12]) that if implemented, would help strengthen decentralization. However, as of the writing of this working paper, the policy remained on paper and there were few signs of a willingness at the upper levels of government to strengthen decentralization in Guinea or for sectoral ministries to fully buy into decentralization.

While the project demonstrated that "democratic governance grows strongest from the base," reinforcement from the top did not occur. One reason is that after the 2008 coup and until the 2011 elections, the project team was barred from working at the national level and with representatives of the executives. This meant that deconcentrated services and prefectoral authorities benefited little from project interventions during this period and that, by default, the project focus remained squarely on strengthening the base. As noted above under the governance findings section, the research team documented several comments, indicating that prefectoral authorities should have been more involved in the program.

As of early 2014, this absence of reforms appears to be affecting urban communes more severely than rural communes. The situation in Conakry's urban communes is particularly dire. The communes

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[12] This "letter" was developed with support from the United Nations Capital Development Fund, United Nations Development Programme, European Union, and Village Communities Support Program *(Programme d'Appui aux Communautés Villageoises). Faison Ensemble* was not directly involved. We mention the document as an example of the achievements and limitations of reform-minded officials at the national level.

have very little control over what happens on their territory, as major initiatives are the monopoly of the governorate, especially where large funds are at stake. This leaves urban areas with a reduced scope for action and limited means to have a visible impact on their territory. Not surprisingly, results of a citizen perception survey conducted by the project in August 2013 revealed a much lower level of satisfaction with the commune in Conakry than in other regions.[13] The situation of Conakry's urban communes is extreme, but the evaluators saw similar issues in Labé, where the commune was finding it difficult to emerge from under the weight of the prefecture.

There are some objective contextual reasons as to why local *Faisons Ensemble* interventions did not significantly percolate upward beyond the local level. We think, however, that in order to gain a better understanding of why this failed to happen, we need to first try to understand what made the project so successful at the local level.

Faisons Ensemble: Nurturing a Mutual Accountability Ecosystem

Accountability typically is viewed as a one-way relationship—in this case, from the commune to the citizens. Governments must account to citizens and, if they fail to do so, citizens must mobilize to hold them accountable. This model is inherently antagonistic, and it does not describe well what the research team observed in the visited communes. In contrast, and as noted before, *Faisons Ensemble* adopted a collaborative approach to citizen–government relations. This approach postulated that government and citizens had more to gain by working together than against each other. In effect, the approach nurtured the emergence of a mutual accountability ecosystem whereby key stakeholders held each other accountable as they worked together to achieve common objectives. Beacon communes opened Council sessions to all key stakeholders; involved citizens in identifying local priorities and reporting on budget and local plan implementation; and in some cases, encouraged civil society to conduct social auditing. In return, civil society actors supported the efforts of their local government and became almost equally conveyors of government action and feedback channels for citizen priorities.

This may explain why the concept of Innovation Circles was readily accepted by partner communes and also how it evolved to meet the needs of Guinean communes. As mentioned earlier, when asked how they viewed their role, Innovation Circle members typically gave one of the two following answers: (1) We are here to support the commune, or (2) we are here to help the commune collect taxes. Their citizen representation function was also mentioned, but never first. There are few stronger signs of citizen accountability (or sense of duty) to government than the act of paying taxes. This is why we argue that *Faisons Ensemble* helped create a social and political ecosystem where key stakeholders held each other accountable through collaboration and awareness-raising.

This mutually reinforcing accountability ecosystem created a strong incentive for all stakeholders to play by the rules. Given the critically low capacity of rural communes, local officials understood how the innovation circles could help them achieve their objectives. The communes had neither the employees needed to assess potential tax revenues, nor the power of persuasion of civil society leaders. Civil society stakeholders also understood what they gained from their support to the commune: participation in

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[13] Thirty-nine percent of Conakry residents reported a favorable opinion of their commune's performance, compared with 83% in Forest Guinea, and 50% in Upper Guinea.

decision making and the ability to influence communal investments. In addition, as they urged fellow citizens to contribute their fair share, civil society leaders were putting their own credibility on the line. They in turn had an even greater stake in ensuring that the commune properly managed its resources. In a sense, this ecosystem was nurtured by the shared weakness of all the stakeholders, who understood that they could achieve their objectives only by working together. The ecosystem was fragile, relying on a delicate equilibrium between shared and individual interest. RTI's evaluators glimpsed how quickly things could change when they conducted an impromptu visit in Dogomet, a commune that had recently been downgraded from Beacon to Champion. There, they met with the General Secretary, who gave a bleak account of the situation in the commune. According to him, the mayor had apparently never fully adhered to the project approach and the model broke down after the commune lost its Beacon status (because of its comparatively slow progress).

The emergence of a mutual-accountability ecosystem in a context defined by weak democratic legitimacy and poor awareness of governments and citizen roles in local government is remarkable. Recall that currently, all of the Guinean local Councils have exceeded their electoral mandates and appointed Special Delegations are in place in nearly half of the country's urban communes. There are some objective reasons to believe that the democratic and knowledge deficit may have actually helped the project succeed at the communal level. These deficits included:

- Councils had been weakened by the absence of elections as members retired, left their posts, and in some cases passed away. Thus, the Councils understood rapidly the benefits they could derive from involving civil society organizations, and the project's Innovation Circles provided the mechanism to do so.
- Councils and delegations were aware that their lack of democratic legitimacy hampered their effectiveness. Working with civil society organizations led by respected local leaders gave them a measure of "proxy legitimacy" with the population.
- Finally, democratic accountability was not completely removed from the equation. Many mayors, Council members, or members of special delegation intended to take part in the next round of local elections. To do so, they would need to be able to run on a record of achievement.

We note that incentives such as these no longer apply at the next higher government level, which helps explain why the mutually reinforcing accountability ecosystem began to break down at the prefecture levels. Based on the results of the discussions with local stakeholders, there are two likely explanations for this failure. The first is that prefectoral officials reported to their state hierarchy and had at best a limited sense of their accountability to citizens. They were judged for their ability to carry out instructions from the center, not for responding to demands from the base.

The second explanation is that, from their perspective, prefects had little to gain from changing the way they were doing business. They derived obvious and tangible benefits from managing opaquely and usurping some of the communes' functions. The benefits they could receive from collaborating with communes and becoming more open and transparent were much more abstract. Without the introduction of meaningful accountability mechanisms, the odds are that the situation will remain unchanged. Convincing the prefectoral level to participate in the mutual accountability ecosystem will necessitate a targeted strategy of pressure from the top and the base, as well as positive and negative incentives to alter

their behavior. That strategy may have to start with informing the prefects about the spirit and the letter of the 2005 communal code. As was noted several times by focus groups participants and interviewees, some prefects appeared not to know about the existence of the code.

Even now, this situation is complicated by weak political will at the top to discuss, promote and enforce decentralization as a national policy. If prefects and ministries perceive they will lose power (and for some, money gained illicitly through the current system), few will willingly cede their prerogatives without pressure from the executive and/or from decentralized structures. Currently, Guinea lacks strong executive political will to promote decentralization as a driver for the country's development, and most of the decentralized leaders have yet to gain enough confidence and courage to demand their rights.

The Sustainability Challenge

The breakdown of the *Faisons Ensemble* model at the higher levels of government raises the question of the sustainability of the project's interventions. Since the *Faisons Ensemble* theory of change relied on a mutually reinforcing virtuous cycle involving all levels of government, the mixed results in influencing policy and vertical intergovernmental relations pose a threat to achieving a lasting impact.

> *"Through good governance we learned that women are equal to men. The first result [of Faisons Ensemble] it's the spirit [way of thinking]; that's the most important because it will remain."*
> **Female civil society leader, Bissikrima**

The research team's data contains many indications, however, that the project's principles at the local level have the potential to become institutionalized:

- Strong ownership of the *Faisons Ensemble* approach by communal officials and civil society representatives
- A greater understanding of communal responsibilities and of key good governance concepts
- Awareness among key actors that they had rights and could claim those rights
- Improvements in resource mobilization that will help sustain communes' interventions
- The presence of positive interactions among all actors.

These are important conditions to ensuring sustainability. The evaluators recorded many proclamations from stakeholders that they would continue on the same path with or without project support, but felt they needed continued support from the project. With expected, and long-overdue, communal elections to take place by the end of 2014, there is a risk that the newly elected teams will not be interested in continuing an initiative that is associated with their predecessors' legacy. In some cases, new leadership will emerge from among the stakeholders who participated in the project. This would help perpetuate the activities. This will not always be the case, however. So the new elections combined with a very weak political will from the center for governance reforms pose a serious threat to the long-term sustainability of the program-related gains.

LESSONS LEARNED FOR
CROSS-SECTORAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAMMING

The findings of the evaluation highlight the many achievements of *Faisons Ensemble* and provide credible evidence that good governance can lead to improved service delivery. We note that the conditions that led to the design and influenced the implementation of a program like *Faisons Ensemble* are unlikely to be repeated in Guinea or elsewhere. However, as donors and practitioners are increasingly looking at using a governance approach to improve sectoral outcomes, much can be learned from the *Faisons Ensemble* experience for designing and implementing those programs.

1. **Meaningful change can start at the base.** Governance programs focused on promoting change at the community level can achieve significant results even in the absence of a favorable national-level enabling environment. This is especially true in rural areas and in small towns, where a visible impact can be achieved with limited resources. This is also a valuable lesson for countries where the national political climate is not conducive to governance reform but where local governments have sufficient space and autonomy to become meaningful actors of local development.

2. **Information is powerful.** The *Faisons Ensemble* experience showed that an approach focused on capacity strengthening and awareness raising with a view to empowering local communities to promote change can be effective. *Faisons Ensemble* interventions did not link capacity building to the promise of physical realization to achieve results. In fact, linking governance improvements to a promise to build roads or schools would likely have been counterproductive, as it would have helped motivate local actors initially but could have worked against long-term sustainability. This research found that, under *Faisons Ensemble*, most stakeholders were eager to put into practice their newly acquired skills and knowledge to demand their rights and work with communes to improve local development.

3. **Deconcentrated levels of government need to be engaged to the greatest extent possible.** In *Faisons Ensemble*, the prefectures proved to be a key bottleneck that prevented the project's achievements from percolating up. Training specially dedicated to the prefectures could have improved the impact. As deconcentrated levels of governments are typically characterized by upward accountably, so governance programs should give special consideration to setting up mechanisms to ensure downward accountability for these territorial structures.

4. **Urban innovations should be promoted.** Urban challenges are qualitatively and quantitatively different from those of rural areas. Therefore, programs must give special attention to adapting approaches to urban realities and to identifying and promoting urban innovations. Given the likely inadequacy of government resources and the presence of a stronger private sector in urban areas, opportunities to engage the private sector must also be actively sought.

5. **Supporting national-level reform champions is key to scaling up and ensuring replication of efforts.** This support could entail the creation of networks of champions at the national level that could function as think tanks and promote research and dialogue on local governance issues. As

such, they could serve as a forum for evidence-based policy making and engage the media and key stakeholders to promote policy dialogue.

6. **A broad multisectoral focus promotes stakeholder engagement.** Every sector matters to the development of local communities. Recall that literacy activities were singled out by *Faisons Ensemble* stakeholders as an important means to empower women and help them become local leaders who could advocate for their own interests. In rural areas, agricultural development is key to improving living conditions but is closely related to proper natural resources management as well as livestock breeding. As stakeholders work together to promote broad-based development, they become increasingly aware of the interconnectedness of the challenges they face.

7. **Support to civil society advocacy must be balanced with the promotion of collaboration between government and nongovernment actors.** *Faisons Ensemble* combined a rights-based, advocacy-focused approach with incentives for stakeholders to work together toward achieving mutually beneficial outcomes. To do so, it attempted to find a balance between supporting improved government performance and building civil society capacity. This was a delicate balancing act to be sure, but an essential one, as the advocacy approach helped articulate community needs and the collaborative approach provided a means for government to begin addressing these needs. Accountability governance models focused on holding those "in power" accountable have limitations in a context where government has such scarce human, financial, and knowledge resources that it is essentially powerless. *Faisons Ensemble* showed that collaborative/mutual accountability models can yield better results than a potentially more confrontational approach.

APPENDIX A: TABLE OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS: GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE OUTCOMES, BY COMMUNE

The table that follows was prepared by the *Faisons Ensemble* field research team in September 2013. In list format, it documents specific outcomes—improvements in governance and in service delivery—that the team found to have occurred in the visited communes since the beginning of the project.

Commune	Governance outcomes	Service outcomes	Sector	Evidence of link between governance and service outcomes (rating)[14]
CU Dixinn **(Conakry)**	✓ Elected officials know and understand their roles and responsibilities ✓ Council sessions now regularly held and open to the public ✓ Improved ranking on municipal development framework (from last to second place in Conakry) ✓ Recent creation of the Innovation Circle through a General Assembly meeting ✓ Budget process open to citizens and officially presented to citizens through meeting and media ✓ Women more involved and aware of communal management issues ✓ Improved revenue mobilization	✓ Improved reception service in health centers (not a consensus) ✓ HIV counseling and testing confidentiality and treatment of youth seeking treatment for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) improved ✓ Improved monitoring of health center by health committees (appears that this remains unsatisfactory and that accountability of centers is limited) ✓ Mosquito nets installed/distributed ✓ Commune buys microscopes for health centers ✓ Health center fees are now respected	Health	✓ Improved reception of youth results from improved monitoring awareness raising by health committees (weak) ✓ Mosquito net installation made possible by increased CU revenues (strong) ✓ Microscope purchase resulted from lobbying from health committee (strong) ✓ *Faisons Ensemble* encourages health committees to monitor fee and rate transparency in health centers (strong)
CR Hèrèmakono **Village Guéyafary**	✓ Farmers' associations and CBOs are better structured and self-sustaining and new associations are created through emulation ✓ Health committee reports to the Council on its activities ✓ Creation of Innovation Circle by appointment of the mayor. Innovation Circle reports to Council during sessions ✓ Improved resource collection as a result of involvement of Innovation Circle ✓ Commune creates its own internal audit structure ✓ Council sessions are open and civil society participates in meetings ✓ Commune now follows procurement rules ✓ Commune utilizes multiple channels to communicate with the population ✓ Mayor and councilors become accessible to the population ✓ APEAE developed a plan of action and has begun to collaborate with school officials	✓ Agricultural advisor provides more comprehensive advice to farmers ✓ Rice yield increased from 800t/ha to 2500t/ha ✓ Commune finances the salaries of three midwives ✓ Health committee uses multiple channels to inform the population about services and fees ✓ Fees are posted in the center and illiterates receive oral information at the center ✓ Patients wait in turn to see the doctor ✓ Increase in patient visits at health centers ✓ CR expatriates contribute to finance health activities and road improvements ✓ CR youth built a new youth center with communal support (building materials) ✓ Girls' school dropout rates decline; graduation rates from primary to secondary improve (8 or 10 before to 53/60 pupils) and 28/38 students pass the *Brevet* (only a handful did before)	Ag Health Other	✓ Agricultural advisor becomes a sought-after advisor and community facilitator as a result of change in role (strong) ✓ Midwives financing resulted from lobbying by health committee (strong) ✓ Increased transparency of health services is a direct consequence of increased awareness on governance (strong) ✓ Contributions from expatriates encouraged by increased transparency, according to mayor (medium) ✓ Youth received the commune's contributions as a result of their lobbying efforts (and increased communal revenues) (strong) ✓ School improved success rates were credited to the fact that *Faisons Ensemble* support had enabled a mobilization of all actors to make sure that children attend schools and that teachers are present (strong) ✓ Forest protection efforts are a result of

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[14] See notes at end of table for rating scale.

Commune	Governance outcomes	Service outcomes	Sector	Evidence of link between governance and service outcomes (rating)[14]
		✓ Guéyafary village protects and manages its forest with state support and replants trees ✓ Woman decides to continue literacy efforts after the end of *Faisons Ensemble* interventions in this area ✓ Primary school built by villagers' efforts and with communal support	Ed	greater awareness and better collaboration between the village and deconcentrated services (medium–strong) ✓ Woman had gained understanding of importance of literacy for women's empowerment and involvement (strong) ✓ Citizens advocate at Council meetings and Council responds positively (contributions to school and health post now on to-do list) (strong)
CR Fermessa-dou	✓ Health committee democratically elected and trained in transparency and effective supervision ✓ Improved collection of fees and taxes through more effective tally of people who owe tax ✓ Improved knowledge of roles and responsibilities of local governments ✓ Service fees, budget, and Council decisions are posted ✓ Farmers' associations are structured, officially recognized *(agrément)*, and better managed ✓ Improved collaboration between commune and agricultural advisor ✓ Improved collaboration between councilors ✓ Council sessions are open to civil society ✓ Creation of an APEAE as a result of *Faisons Ensemble* efforts led to community-based management of schools ✓ Commune requires receipts for government transfers ✓ Creation of a "mediation bureau" to resolve conflicts between farmers and livestock breeders	✓ Fees charged for medication are posted and stable ✓ Improved management of drug procurement and supplies ✓ Increased rice yields lead to decrease in price and greater affordability ✓ Greater effectiveness of agricultural advisor leads to change in agricultural practices ✓ Road improvement financed by communes and farmers' association ✓ Communal seed bank created ✓ Health center financed by communes and farmers' association ✓ Improve conditions for primary and secondary school students ✓ Improved recruitment of teachers ✓ Tree planting program implemented with communal support ✓ Reduction in conflict between farmers and herders	Health Ag Ed NRM Conflict	✓ Improved transparency and management is a direct result of governance training (strong) ✓ Improved results in agriculture are in part the result of the changing role of the agricultural advisor and more effective farmers' associations (medium–strong) ✓ Construction of health center and road improvements are made possible by partnership between commune and associations (strong) ✓ APEAE leads to strong community involvement and improved conditions for students as well better ability to recruit teachers (medium) ✓ Tree planting financed in part by newly disclosed government transfer (strong) ✓ Improved relation between farmers and herders results from new best practice (strong, see below)

Commune	Governance outcomes	Service outcomes	Sector	Evidence of link between governance and service outcomes (rating)[14]
CR Cissela	✓ Council sessions are open to the public ✓ Improved relation with sub-prefecture through clarification of roles and improved tax collection ✓ Farmers' association members better understand their roles ✓ Mutual learning between deconcentrated services and population ✓ CR with Circle supports tally of all taxable sectors present in the commune. Leads to an improvement in tax collection ✓ Upsurge in lobbying of commune by citizens	✓ Farmers adopt improved agricultural techniques ✓ Agricultural advisor services are now in greater demand ✓ Increased awareness leads to more vaccination of animals ✓ Women learn how to preserve fruit ✓ Fees for health center are posted and stable ✓ Improved environmental oversight and forest protection ✓ Improved environmental-awareness campaigns' effectiveness ✓ Renovation of schools to improve learning conditions ✓ Greater awareness of conditions for children to learn in school (hygiene, school bag, timeliness) ✓ Reduction in child dropout rates and improvement in education quality ✓ Teachers no longer "rent" children to conduct menial tasks against payment of school fees ✓ Commune initiates a forest protection program ✓ Women use the improved cook stove leading to a reduced need for wood	Ag Health Ed Forest	✓ Improved results in agriculture are in part the result of the changing role of the agricultural advisor and more effective farmers' associations (medium–strong) ✓ Fee posting results from greater awareness about need for transparency ✓ Improvements in education (quality and learning conditions) are a direct result of the involvement of APEAE in school affairs and of their lobbying (strong) ✓ Forest protection initiative was born after participation in a communal fair sponsored by *Faisons Ensemble* (strong) ✓ Cook stove adoption facilitated by increased involvement of farmer associations as well as technical support (weak)
CR Bissikrima	✓ Council sessions are open and broadcast live on the radio ✓ Information on services and fees posted ✓ Innovation Circle created and operational ✓ Civil society involvement in tax collection leads to improved tax rates ✓ Improved collaboration and consultation between civil society and the commune ✓ Greater women's involvement in governance ✓ Civil society better structured, managed, and able to plan and raise funds for their activities ✓ Commune conducts internal audit of all services	✓ Commune helps civil society organizations register formally ✓ Improved access to phytosanitary (disease-free plant) products ✓ Improved forest management and conservation ✓ Health center posts service and medication fees ✓ Improved information and awareness-raising on health services and issues	Ag Health	✓ Improved recognition of some CBOs leads to better access to supplies (strong) ✓ Community mobilization and awareness of COGEF helps control illegal logging (strong) ✓ Health committee involved in awareness and transparency efforts

Commune	Governance outcomes	Service outcomes	Sector	Evidence of link between governance and service outcomes (rating)[14]
CU Dabola	✓ Increased women's participation in local affairs ✓ Social audit conducted, with focus on health center ✓ Improved collaboration between civil society and commune ✓ APEAE capacity to manage itself and manage the school increased ✓ Improved tax collection ✓ Innovation Circle democratically selected and functional ✓ Procurement procedures are adhered to ✓ Improved understanding of their roles and responsibilities and relations with other government structures	✓ Fees posted in health center and sometimes subsidized if deemed too expensive ✓ Enhanced communication and awareness effort about health services and issues ✓ Birthing room is renovated with communal funds ✓ Increase in medical consultations ✓ Improved quality of STD/HIV testing services ✓ Farmers' association obtained reduction in water fees ✓ Improved learning conditions for students ✓ Greater monitoring of children's schooling by parents leads to decreased delinquency ✓ Children's expulsions from school become rare and are no longer arbitrary ✓ Improved success rates for children, especially in high school ✓ Improved yield for rice production ✓ Preserving of fruits and vegetables	Health Water Ed Ag	✓ Posting of fee and improved communication are a result of governance training (strong) ✓ Increased consultations result from better service and treatment of patients (weak–medium) ✓ Renovation of birthing room results from lobbying efforts of the committee (strong) ✓ Health committee oversees testing centers (weak) ✓ Farmers' association uses lobbying and negotiation techniques with water utility to obtain lower rates (strong) ✓ Community involvement in school management has helped improve learning conditions and outcomes (medium–strong) ✓ Better managed farmers' association helps disseminate new techniques and approaches (medium)
CR Lafou	✓ Budget and other communal information posted ✓ Commune consults with civil society ✓ Innovation Circle democratically set up and functional ✓ Communal sessions open to civil society	✓ Increased community oversight over teachers	Ed	✓ Increased oversight is a result of governance training (strong)
CU Labé	✓ Communal sessions open to civil society ✓ Commune does a tally of all potential sources of revenue ✓ Increased transparency and inclusiveness in decision-making process ✓ Budget and service fees are posted ✓ Commune uses community radio to communicate with population ✓ Public procurement follows official procedures ✓ Early signs of improvement in tax collection ✓ Creation of Innovation Circle ✓ Set up a steering committee to monitor implementation of the Local Development Program *(Programme de Développement*			

Commune	Governance outcomes	Service outcomes	Sector	Evidence of link between governance and service outcomes (rating)[14]
	Local)			
CU Kaloum **(Conakry)**	✓ Civil society involved in budget process ✓ CU conducted an internal audit of the commune's cadastral service ✓ Commune understands its mission and prerogatives ✓ Information on budget, tax collection (rates and amounts) and services posted ✓ APEAE governance improved	✓ Renovation of two health centers ✓ Management of health centers improved (including personnel attendance; transparency in revenues) ✓ Oversight of distribution of bed nets ✓ Improved learning conditions for children and success rates		✓ Renovation resulted from the committee's lobbying (strong) ✓ Governance improvement and effective delivery of bed nets resulted from committee oversight (strong) ✓ Improved learning linked to improvements in APEAE oversight (weak)

Rating scale for causal link between governance and improved services

Strong: There is strong evidence to support the link; either it was specifically and convincingly mentioned by the actors or the link is a direct result of an activity.

Medium: The link is very likely, either because of specific mention of stakeholders or because it has been documented in other cases.

Weak: The link is likely but cannot be cannot be demonstrated because there is no direct testimony to the link, or it is not directly related to a governance outcome.