



Reframing Government Evaluation: Introducing the Government Accountability and Delivery Effectiveness Index (GADEI) for Improved Performance Measurement

by

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Abstract

Despite the proliferation of governance indicators in recent decades, a persistent gap remains in capturing the real-time performance of governments in delivering policy outcomes, responding to citizen needs, and ensuring institutional accountability. This paper proposes the Government Accountability and Delivery Effectiveness Index (GADEI)—a multidimensional, adaptive, and impact-oriented framework designed to assess how effectively governments translate policy commitments into tangible public value. GADEI is structured around five interrelated pillars: Policy Implementation Fidelity, Institutional Agility, Public Value Outcomes, Transparency and Anti-Corruption Metrics, and Citizen Feedback. By linking governance evaluation to observable delivery, responsiveness, and trust metrics, GADEI provides a dynamic and actionable lens for assessing state effectiveness. The framework holds significant utility for informing fiscal policy, guiding public sector reform, and enhancing democratic accountability, particularly in contexts where traditional input- or perception-based measures fall short.

Keywords: Governance Indicators, Government Performance, Public Sector Reform, Accountability Metrics, Citizen-cantered Evaluation

JEL: H11; H83; O43; D73

1. Introduction

The measurement of government performance remains a central concern in development economics and public administration. In both theory and policy, the effectiveness of state institutions is widely acknowledged as a key determinant of economic development, social welfare, and political legitimacy (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012; Besley and Persson, 2011). This is particularly salient in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where weak state capacity and institutional fragility continue to impede the realization of sustainable development goals (SDGs). Notwithstanding the

progress achieved through conventional governance metrics—such as the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), and the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG)—these instruments are increasingly criticized for their methodological limitations and conceptual narrowness.

The World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), and the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) are widely used tools for evaluating governance quality, institutional effectiveness, and political risks across countries. While these indices have advanced the global discourse on governance and accountability, they remain subject to notable theoretical, methodological, and practical limitations—particularly when applied to the complex realities of developing countries. The WGI aggregates six broad governance dimensions—voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption—based on multiple data sources, many of which are perception-based. Similarly, the CPI is a composite index relying on expert assessments and business surveys to rank countries based on perceived corruption levels. The ICRG, on the other hand, is oriented toward investors, assessing political, economic, and financial risks, with governance as a subcomponent.

A core theoretical critique of these indices lies in their heavy reliance on neoliberal institutionalism. By privileging Western liberal democratic norms (e.g., competitive elections, deregulated markets, and Anglo-American legal traditions), they often fail to account for institutional diversity and path-dependent governance mechanisms that characterize many developing countries. The assumption that “good governance” as defined by these indices is universally applicable overlooks the legitimacy of informal institutions and hybrid governance arrangements that play a central role in service delivery and conflict resolution in low-capacity states. Moreover, the CPI and WGI are often critiqued for their circular reasoning: poor countries rank low in governance indices, which then influence aid and investment decisions, perpetuating institutional disadvantage. These indices rarely account for structural constraints (such as colonial legacies or external debt obligations) that shape governance outcomes in the Global South. The reliance on perception-based data is a significant limitation. The WGI and CPI derive much of their information from expert opinions, often based outside the countries they assess. This opens up issues of bias, external benchmarking, and cultural misalignment. For instance, what is perceived as “corruption” in one context may be a form of informal reciprocity or clientelism in another—practices that may function as social safety nets in weak welfare states.

The ICRG, while more systematic in its coding scheme, is oriented toward the needs of foreign investors rather than domestic development priorities. This investor bias may lead to underestimation of governance improvements that do not immediately enhance investment climate but contribute to long-term human development. From a policy standpoint, the one-size-fits-all nature of these indices undermines their utility. Many African and South Asian countries, for instance, score poorly in these indices despite undertaking context-specific governance reforms. Governments in developing

countries often find themselves compelled to “perform to the indicators” rather than pursue endogenous reforms aligned with local realities. Additionally, these indices are ill-suited for capturing subnational governance variations—critical in large, federated states like Nigeria, India, or Brazil—where governance quality varies significantly across regions. Their national-level aggregation masks important within-country disparities, reducing their usefulness for targeted policy interventions. Overall, while the WGI, CPI, and ICRG have been instrumental in drawing attention to the importance of governance in development, their theoretical biases, methodological weaknesses, and limited applicability to the diverse institutional realities of developing countries call for caution. There is an urgent need for more context-sensitive, inclusive, and multidimensional tools that capture not just the symptoms but the systemic determinants of governance and development outcomes.

Existing indices, while valuable, are often heavily reliant on perceptions, normative assessments, or legal-institutional proxies that insufficiently capture the performance of governments in delivering public goods and services (Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi, 2009; Knack, 2006). They typically emphasize *de jure* frameworks (such as laws, regulations, and rules) rather than *de facto* outputs and outcomes (such as health service delivery, infrastructure quality, or fiscal accountability). Moreover, their coarse granularity and limited responsiveness to short-run policy interventions restrict their utility in real-time policy evaluation and feedback mechanisms. In sum, the existing suite of governance indices provides useful cross-country benchmarks but suffers from four major shortcomings that GADEI seeks to address:

- i. **Overreliance on Subjective Measures:** Many indices depend on perceptions of corruption or regulatory quality, often derived from expert surveys or business community assessments. This introduces bias and temporal lags, undermining their policy diagnostic value (Thomas, 2010).
- ii. **Insufficient Sectoral Disaggregation:** Conventional indices provide national-level snapshots that obscure sector-specific or subnational performance heterogeneity. For instance, a country might score well on “regulatory quality” overall while failing to deliver basic healthcare in rural areas.
- iii. **Lack of Policy Sensitivity:** Governance ratings are generally sticky and slow to respond to policy reforms or administrative innovations. This undermines their utility in evaluating short- to medium-term changes (Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock, 2017).
- iv. **Normative Anchoring:** Many existing frameworks benchmark performance against Western institutional models, implicitly assuming a one-size-fits-all trajectory of state-building, which is neither historically accurate nor contextually appropriate.

In response to these limitations, this paper proposes a novel measurement tool—the Government Accountability and Delivery Effectiveness Index (GADEI)—as a multidimensional, empirically grounded framework that shifts the evaluative perception from institutional form to institutional performance. GADEI is designed to provide a

more accurate, citizen-centred, and policy-relevant measure of how governments function in practice, particularly in the Global South.

2. Theoretical Foundations and Conceptual Framework

The Government Accountability and Delivery Effectiveness Index (GADEI) is anchored in a rich theoretical tradition that seeks to reconceptualize state performance in a manner that goes beyond conventional metrics of legality, bureaucratic procedures, or static efficiency. The framework draws its strength from four major intellectual streams in economic and institutional theory: Public Choice Theory, New Public Management (NPM), the Capability Approach, and Adaptive Governance and Crisis Response. Together, these frameworks provide both the normative and analytical scaffolding upon which GADEI is constructed. By fusing economic rationalism with institutional adaptability and human development considerations, GADEI offers a dynamic, citizen-centred metric of state performance. Each of the four theoretical underpinnings is examined in depth well as how they jointly inform the architecture of GADEI.

1. Public Choice Theory: Incentive Alignment and Governance Accountability

Public Choice Theory, as developed by Buchanan and Tullock (1962), offers a seminal critique of the traditional assumption that governments invariably act in the public interest. Instead, it posits that, political actors—whether elected officials or bureaucrats—are rational agents motivated by self-interest, subject to constraints and incentives within institutional structures. This perspective deeply reshapes how we interpret government behavior, highlighting the need for institutional mechanisms that realign state actions with collective welfare.

In the context of GADEI, Public Choice Theory plays a foundational role in emphasizing the necessity of incentive-compatible governance. The index explicitly captures dimensions such as transparency, fiscal responsibility, citizen oversight mechanisms, and corruption mitigation efforts. By doing so, GADEI seeks to measure not merely the inputs or formal structures of governance but the extent to which public sector institutions are designed to minimize agency loss and principal-agent problems. It integrates performance metrics that reflect how well public institutions internalize citizen preferences, reward efficiency, and sanction non-performance.

More broadly, GADEI advances the Public Choice insight by extending accountability beyond elections or rule-based monitoring to include outcome-oriented feedback loops. These loops are essential in societies where political markets are thin, civic engagement is weak, and informational asymmetries are high—conditions typical of many developing and transitioning economies.

2. New Public Management: Managerialism, Decentralization, and Performance Orientation

The New Public Management (NPM) paradigm emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a response to perceived inefficiencies in traditional bureaucracies. Osborne and Gaebler (1992) were particularly influential in championing a managerial model of government that prioritized outcomes over processes, emphasized entrepreneurial governance, and advocated for decentralization, market mechanisms, and performance

measurement. Incorporating this tradition, GADEI reflects the NPM emphasis on results-based governance and public value delivery. The framework evaluates the extent to which governments are able to translate strategic plans, budgetary allocations, and policy intentions into tangible developmental outcomes. Fundamental to GADEI is the idea that state capacity must be assessed not merely by compliance with procedural norms but by the effectiveness of service delivery in sectors such as health, education, infrastructure, and security. Moreover, GADEI also integrates the NPM concern with decentralization, recognizing that governance performance cannot be captured solely at the national level. Subnational governments—especially in federal or devolved systems like Nigeria—play a critical role in delivering public goods and responding to local needs. By incorporating spatially disaggregated data and subnational performance metrics, GADEI aligns with the NPM goal of bringing government “closer to the people.” Importantly, while adopting NPM’s performance ethos, GADEI also acknowledges critiques of NPM, especially its overreliance on quantitative metrics, potential erosion of democratic deliberation, and susceptibility to gaming. Accordingly, GADEI adopts a balanced approach that integrates both quantitative indicators and qualitative diagnostics, ensuring that performance evaluation remains holistic and context-sensitive.

3. The Capability Approach: Human Development, Agency, and Freedom

Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach (1999) radically shifted the development discourse from a focus on income and resources to one centred on freedom, agency, and human capabilities. In Sen’s framework, the quality of governance must ultimately be judged by its capacity to enhance individuals’ substantive freedoms—the real opportunities people have to lead lives they value.

GADEI integrates this human development perspective by explicitly linking government effectiveness to citizen well-being. This linkage is not assumed but empirically verified through indicators that track improvements in capabilities such as health (e.g., maternal mortality), education (e.g., learning outcomes), and economic opportunity (e.g., youth employment). Furthermore, GADEI pays attention to inequality in the distribution of these capabilities, recognizing that development is incomplete when large segments of the population remain excluded. By rooting its evaluative framework in the Capability Approach, GADEI transcends the technocratic limitations of governance indices that focus solely on procedural compliance or economic outputs. Instead, it aligns performance with outcomes that reflect the expansion of human freedoms, whether in the form of improved access to justice, reduction in gender-based constraints, or enhancement of voice and participation in governance. Sen’s theory also emphasizes the importance of public reasoning and democratic dialogue. Accordingly, GADEI is designed to be not only a measurement tool but also a deliberative instrument, encouraging informed debate on what constitutes good governance in a given socio-political context.

4. Adaptive Governance and Crisis Response: Agility in a Volatile World

The 21st century has witnessed a proliferation of systemic shocks—ranging from pandemics and financial crises to climate-related disasters and political upheaval. In this context, the static assumptions of rational planning and linear delivery models have

proven inadequate. Ansell and Gash (2008), among others, have proposed the concept of adaptive governance, which emphasizes learning, flexibility, collaboration, and resilience. GADEI incorporates this dynamic by assessing not only baseline governance performance but also government agility and crisis responsiveness. This includes indicators such as the speed and inclusiveness of emergency responses, adaptability of fiscal frameworks, institutional learning capacities, and capacity for intergovernmental coordination during crises. The inclusion of adaptive governance as a theoretical pillar reflects a shift from a “planning and control” model of governance to one of “anticipation and adaptation.” This shift is particularly salient in fragile and conflict-affected contexts where uncertainty, complexity, and limited state capacity are endemic. GADEI provides a perspective through which governments’ abilities to cope with uncertainty, recover from shocks, and build systemic resilience can be objectively assessed. Moreover, adaptive governance is closely linked to innovation. GADEI evaluates whether governments are able to adopt digital tools, engage in policy experimentation, and respond flexibly to feedback from citizens and service delivery ecosystems. This dimension is crucial in a world where rigid bureaucracies often lag behind societal and technological changes.

2.1 Bridging Intent, Institutions, and Outcomes: The GADEI Logic

Taken together, these four theoretical pillars provide a multidimensional framework for understanding and assessing government performance. GADEI is not merely an aggregation of indicators but a coherent model that seeks to bridge the gap between government intent, institutional processes, and citizen outcomes. It does so by integrating:

Intent: Reflecting the normative aspirations of governments, including policy targets, constitutional commitments, and national development plans.

Institutions: Evaluating the organizational, legal, and procedural mechanisms through which intent is operationalized.

Outcomes: Capturing the real-world consequences of governance for individuals, communities, and economies, with special emphasis on human development and inclusion. This bridging function distinguishes GADEI from existing indices that often overemphasize form over function or assume a linear relationship between inputs and outcomes. In reality, state effectiveness depends on a complex interaction of incentives, capabilities, institutional architecture, and external context. GADEI accounts for this complexity by employing a weighted, modular design that can be adapted to specific country or subnational contexts, including variations in institutional development, data availability, and development priorities. Furthermore, by embedding theoretical coherence into its structure, GADEI avoids the pitfalls of index proliferation and indicator overload. Each component of the index is justified not only by empirical relevance but also by its theoretical grounding, ensuring analytical robustness and policy applicability.

The Government Accountability and Delivery Effectiveness Index (GADEI) emerges as a theoretically grounded and policy-relevant tool for assessing public sector performance. Rooted in Public Choice Theory, New Public Management, the Capability Approach, and Adaptive Governance, the GADEI framework offers a multidimensional,

forward-looking, and context-sensitive metric of state performance. By bridging intent, institutions, and outcomes, it responds to the enduring challenge of making governments more accountable, agile, and aligned with citizen welfare. In doing so, GADEI moves the discourse on governance evaluation from a focus on institutional formality or abstract capability to one centred on real-world impact, democratic responsiveness, and human-centered development. It invites both scholars and policymakers to rethink how we conceptualize and measure what governments do, why they do it, and—most critically—what difference it makes to the lives of the people they serve.

2.2 Conceptual Framework of GADEI

GADEI comprises five interrelated pillars, each operationalized through empirically measurable indicators. The framework is designed to provide a comprehensive, empirically grounded measure of government performance, especially in developing countries. It captures not just what governments intend to do (plans, policies), but what they actually deliver, how quickly and transparently they act, and how citizens perceive and respond to these efforts.

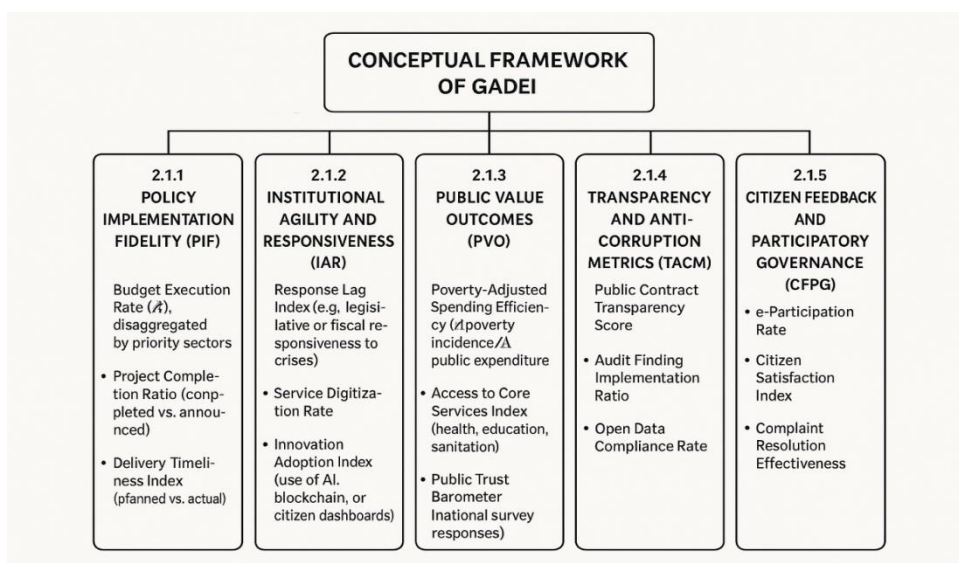


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of GADEI

Source: Authors

Discussion of the Five Interrelated Pillars and Their Indicators

1. Policy Implementation Fidelity (PIF)

Focus: Measures how faithfully government policies and budgets are translated into actual outcomes.

Indicators:

Budget Execution Rate: Measures the proportion of budgeted funds actually spent, disaggregated by sectors (e.g., education, health). A low rate suggests bottlenecks or weak implementation.

Project Completion Ratio: Ratio of completed projects to those announced. Helps assess delivery consistency.

Delivery Timeliness Index: Compares planned timelines to actual completion times.

Linkage: High PIF leads to greater public value and trust, but also depends on institutional agility (e.g., capacity to respond to delays or failures).

2. Institutional Agility and Responsiveness (IAR)

Focus: Assesses the speed, innovation, and adaptability of public institutions.

Indicators:

Response Lag Index: Measures how quickly institutions respond to crises (like pandemics or economic shocks).

Service Digitization Rate: Proportion of public services available online, indicating modernization and accessibility.

Innovation Adoption Index: Tracks the use of modern tools (e.g., AI, blockchain) to improve service delivery and transparency.

Linkage: IAR affects PIF (agile institutions implement better) and also influences citizen trust and satisfaction (PVO and CFPG).

3. Public Value Outcomes (PVO)

Focus: Gauges the real-world socio-economic outcomes produced by government actions.

Indicators:

Poverty-Adjusted Spending Efficiency: Measures reduction in poverty per unit of public spending.

Access to Core Services Index: Tracks citizen access to health, education, and sanitation.

Public Trust Barometer: Based on citizen surveys reflecting confidence in government.

Linkage: PVO is the cumulative outcome of performance in PIF and IAR. It also feeds back into CFPG, as citizens judge performance through personal and collective experiences.

4. Transparency and Anti-Corruption Metrics (TACM)

Focus: Evaluates how open, accountable, and corruption-resistant government processes are.

Indicators:

Public Contract Transparency Score: Measures how openly procurement data is published and accessible.

Audit Finding Implementation Ratio: Tracks whether recommendations from audits are acted upon.

Open Data Compliance Rate: Assesses adherence to publishing government data (budgets, contracts, etc.).

Linkage: TACM supports effective PIF and strengthens public trust (PVO) and feedback systems (CFPG). Institutions that are transparent tend to be more responsive and accountable.

5. Citizen Feedback and Participatory Governance (CFPG)

Focus: Measures how governments engage with citizens and respond to their inputs.

Indicators:

e-Participation Rate: Measures digital engagement in policymaking (e.g., public consultations).

Citizen Satisfaction Index: Captures how citizens rate government services and responsiveness.

Complaint Resolution Effectiveness: Assesses how efficiently grievances are addressed.

Linkage: CFPG ensures a feedback loop. When citizens are engaged and heard, it improves trust (PVO), forces better policy execution (PIF), and strengthens institutional agility (IAR).

2.2.1 Interlinkages and Feedback Loops

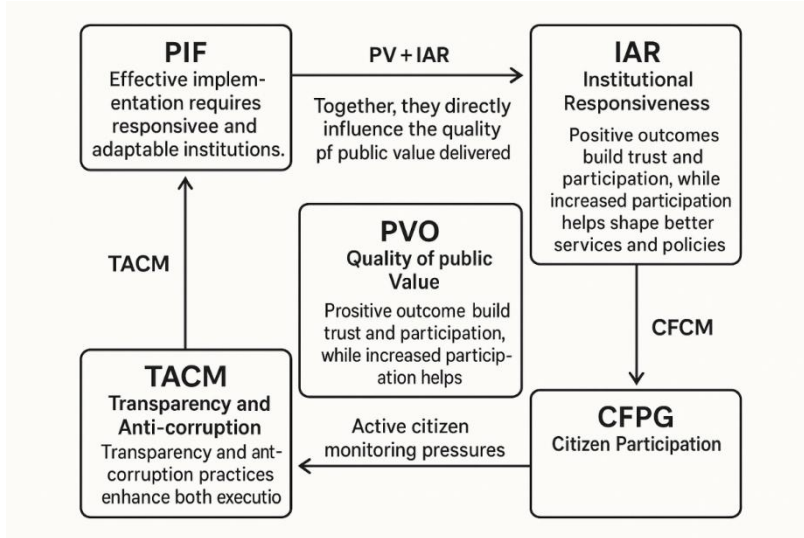


Figure 2: Interlinkages and Feedback Loops

Source: Authors

Figure 2 illustrates the dynamic interrelationship between key components of effective governance and public value delivery. At the core is the linkage between Policy Implementation Fidelity (PIF) and Institutional Agility and Responsiveness (IAR). Effective implementation depends on institutions that can adapt and respond to emerging needs, and together, PIF and IAR directly influence the Quality of Public Value Outcomes (PVO)—the ultimate goal of governance.

Transparency and Anti-Corruption Measures (TACM) enhance both PIF and IAR by ensuring that implementation is accountable and institutions are answerable to citizens. These measures strengthen trust and reduce inefficiencies. As public value outcomes improve, citizens are more likely to trust institutions and engage in Citizen Feedback, Participation, and Governance (CFPG). This participation, in turn, feeds back into institutional performance, helping shape better policies and services, and reinforcing responsiveness. Moreover, citizen engagement exerts pressure on institutions to remain transparent and accountable, further bolstering TACM. This creates a virtuous cycle where transparency, responsiveness, implementation, and participation reinforce one another to improve governance and public outcomes.

2.2.2 Systemic Implications

This interconnected structure makes GADEI a dynamic system rather than a static measure. It captures the full governance cycle—from inputs to outputs and outcomes—while integrating both institutional performance and citizen accountability. It also reflects the vital interplay between policy, action, and public perception, which together shape the credibility and legitimacy of public institutions. In practical terms, GADEI can be computed for subnational entities (like Nigerian states), allowing for granular analysis, benchmarking, and evidence-based reforms. Each pillar is scored on a 0–1 normalized scale. A composite GADEI score is computed using context-sensitive weights.

3. Materials and Methods

The formula represents a *weighted composite index* for the *Government Accountability and Delivery Effectiveness Index (GADEI)*, expressed as:

$$GADEI = \sum_{i=1}^5 w_i \cdot S_i$$

where:

S_i denotes the score of the *i-th* pillar of governance performance,

w_i is the weight assigned to the *i-th* pillar, reflecting its relative importance.

This methodology follows a linear aggregation approach, which allows for the combination of multiple dimensions of government performance—such as policy fidelity, institutional agility, transparency, responsiveness, and citizen engagement—into a single index. Each pillar is operationalized using empirically measurable indicators, which are normalized to ensure comparability.

Weights can be derived through expert judgment, principal component analysis (PCA), or stakeholder consensus, ensuring that the index captures context-specific governance priorities. The final GADEI score offers a synthetic yet interpretable measure of how well a government performs in delivering public services and being accountable to its citizens. This methodology enhances comparability across regions or time, supports diagnostic assessment, and is particularly suitable for developing country contexts where traditional governance indices may lack granularity or contextual relevance.

The formula above represents a weighted composite index, specifically the Government Accountability and Delivery Effectiveness Index (GADEI). It is designed to evaluate and measure the performance of government institutions in terms of accountability and service delivery. The formula aggregates performance across five distinct dimensions or sub-indicators, each representing a core component of governance or service effectiveness.

Break down of the formula and explain of each component:

1. GADEI (Government Accountability and Delivery Effectiveness Index)

GADEI is a composite index that ranges from **0** to **1**, where:

- ✓ A value closer to **1** signifies *higher government accountability and better service delivery performance*.

- ✓ A value closer to **0** indicates *poor accountability and ineffective delivery of public services*.

2. The Summation Symbol ($\sum_{i=1}^5$)

This denotes the **sum** of five components (i.e., sub-indicators), indexed by i from 1 to 5. Each component represents a specific domain of government performance.

3. S_i — The Standardized Score of Indicator i

Each S_i refers to the **normalized or standardized value** of the i^{th} sub-indicator of government accountability and effectiveness.

Scores are usually rescaled to lie between **0 (worst performance)** and **1 (best performance)** to ensure comparability.

Examples of possible sub-indicators include:

- i. Transparency and Access to Information
- ii. Public Service Delivery Efficiency
- iii. Citizen Participation and Feedback Mechanisms
- iv. Anti-Corruption Measures and Rule of Law
- v. Fiscal Responsibility and Budgetary Execution

4. W_i — The Weight Assigned to Indicator i

Each w_i represents the **weight** assigned to the corresponding indicator S_i , where:

$$\sum_{i=1}^5 w_i = 1$$

The weights capture the **relative importance** of each sub-indicator in determining overall government performance.

Weights can be:

Equal (e.g., $w_i=0.2$ for all i) if no indicator is prioritized.

Differential, based on expert judgment, empirical evidence, or policy relevance (e.g., placing greater weight on corruption control in developing countries).

5. Interpretation

By multiplying the standardized score S_i of each indicator by its corresponding weight w_i , and summing across all five dimensions, the GADEI provides a single, composite score. This index enables:

- Cross-country or cross-state comparisons of government effectiveness.
- Tracking of governance performance over time.
- Diagnostics for identifying areas of strength or weakness in public sector accountability.

Indicator (i)	Description	Weight (w_i)	Score (S_i)	Contribution ($w_i \cdot S_i$)
1	Transparency & Information Access	0.20	0.70	0.140
2	Service Delivery Efficiency	0.25	0.60	0.150
3	Citizen Participation	0.15	0.50	0.075
4	Anti-Corruption & Rule of Law	0.25	0.40	0.100

5	Fiscal Responsibility & Budgeting	0.15	0.80	0.120
	Total GADEI Score	1.00	—	0.585

Example (Hypothetical Weights and Scores)

So, the overall GADEI score = **0.585**, suggesting moderate government effectiveness with room for improvement.

The GADEI framework offers a robust, multidimensional tool for measuring and comparing government performance. Its weighted design ensures flexibility and adaptability across contexts, making it especially useful for policymakers, development economists, and governance experts working in both developed and developing countries. GADEI builds upon a rich tradition of institutional economics and public choice theory, incorporating insights from new institutional economics, performance-based budgeting, and developmental governance frameworks. The index is grounded in the understanding that the state is both a provider of collective goods and a coordinator of development efforts (North, 1990; Rodrik, 2004). Accordingly, its performance must be assessed not only by procedural compliance but by the effectiveness, inclusiveness, and responsiveness of its delivery mechanisms.

4. Structure and Operationalization of GADEI

GADEI is structured as a composite index consisting of weighted sub-indices across four key pillars:

4.1 Transparency and Accountability (TA)

This pillar assesses the openness of government operations, the strength of anti-corruption mechanisms, and the institutionalization of oversight and redress systems. Indicators may include the timeliness and accessibility of budget reports, compliance with procurement transparency laws, and the effectiveness of ombudsman institutions.

4.2 Service Delivery and Infrastructure (SDI)

Here, the focus is on quantifiable outputs in education, health, transportation, and digital infrastructure. Measures include school completion rates, immunization coverage, road density and quality, and broadband penetration. This component reflects both access and quality dimensions of public service provision.

4.3 Fiscal Responsibility and Resource Efficiency (FRRE)

This pillar evaluates how efficiently public resources are mobilized and allocated. Key indicators include the public expenditure-to-GDP ratio, variance between budgeted and actual spending, public debt sustainability, and leakages in public procurement systems.

4.4 Responsiveness and Social Inclusion (RSI)

GADEI includes a dynamic measure of how government policies address the needs of marginalized groups, respond to crises, and adapt to evolving citizen expectations. It integrates participatory governance metrics, citizen satisfaction surveys,

and grievance redress timelines. The composite index is constructed using principal component analysis (PCA) to minimize multicollinearity and ensure robustness in aggregation. Each component is normalized on a 0–1 scale, allowing for comparability across units and time periods.

5. Empirical and Policy Relevance

Preliminary application of GADEI in selected Sub-Saharan African and Southeast Asian countries demonstrates its value in capturing performance gaps not evident in traditional indices. For example, while Nigeria ranks low on the WGI due to perceived corruption, GADEI reveals significant subnational variance in health and education service delivery, suggesting targeted areas for fiscal decentralization and capacity building. Moreover, GADEI's responsiveness to short-run improvements—such as the implementation of digital payment systems for welfare disbursements or the launch of e-governance platforms—enables governments to monitor and communicate performance improvements more credibly. This feedback loop enhances policy credibility and citizen trust, both critical to democratic consolidation and developmental legitimacy (Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg, 2016).

Comparative Advantage over Existing Indices

While indices like HDI (UNDP, 1990), CPI (Transparency International), and Government Effectiveness (WGI) have served as critical reference points, they share three limitations:

Outcome-Only Orientation: They reflect results without linking back to implementation quality or institutional responsiveness.

Perception Bias: Many rely heavily on expert or elite surveys, often diverging from citizen experiences.

Temporal Inflexibility: Annual updates are often too slow for real-time governance needs.

GADEI addresses these by:

- Integrating process, output, and outcome indicators;
- Leveraging digital and crowdsourced data to reduce perception bias;
- Enabling quarterly or even monthly updates for policy monitoring.

5.1 Implementation and Data Sources

GADEI is designed to be implementable by national statistics offices, independent audit bodies, or multilateral agencies. Data inputs include:

- i. Government administrative datasets (budgets, audits, service delivery logs)
- ii. Citizen survey instruments
- iii. e-Government and API-based platforms
- iv. External third-party evaluations (e.g., from CSOs or international partners)

Real-time dashboards can visualize sectoral or regional GADEI scores, aiding performance-based budgeting, subnational benchmarking, or electoral accountability.

5.2 Policy Implications

GADEI holds broad relevance across key governance domains. In public sector reforms, it helps align institutional incentives with actual service delivery. For donor engagement, it offers a tool to monitor conditional aid and performance-based lending. Within fiscal decentralization, GADEI can guide the allocation of subnational revenue transfers. It also strengthens civic engagement by fostering public trust, amplifying citizen voice, and supporting co-governance efforts.

By promoting transparency and feedback loops, GADEI may also serve as a governance innovation that reduces elite capture and bureaucratic inertia.

5.3 Challenges and Limitations

Key implementation risks include the potential for data manipulation, which can be mitigated through independent third-party audits. Capacity constraints, particularly in low-capacity states, call for phased rollouts to ensure effective adoption. Disputes over indicator weighting can be managed through participatory consultations and by allowing contextual flexibility.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Government Accountability and Delivery Effectiveness Index (GADEI) represents a significant methodological and conceptual innovation in the measurement of public sector performance. By anchoring state evaluation in empirically grounded, multidimensional, and citizen-centred indicators, GADEI provides a more accurate and actionable framework for assessing governance effectiveness. It shifts the analytical lens beyond institutional forms and subjective perceptions to institutional functions and measurable outputs, offering a robust diagnostic tool for 21st-century governance. In an era marked by escalating citizen demands and increasingly complex policy challenges, governments must not only be well-intentioned but demonstrably effective. The GADEI advances this imperative by providing a novel evaluative framework that balances technocratic rigour with democratic responsiveness. It reconceptualizes government performance not simply in terms of intentions or promises, but in relation to outcomes delivered and experiences felt by the citizenry. The implications of GADEI are far-reaching for policymakers, development practitioners, and international donors. It enables more precise targeting of reforms, facilitates performance benchmarking across jurisdictions, and creates an evidence base for results-based public sector management. Moreover, it supports developmental statecraft in contexts where, conventional governance indicators often obscure critical performance deficits.

Looking forward, future research should prioritize refining the index's weighting scheme, expanding cross-country and sub-national data coverage, and integrating artificial intelligence to enable real-time monitoring and predictive analytics. These enhancements will further consolidate GADEI's potential as a transformative instrument for governance accountability and policy effectiveness in the Global South and beyond.

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APPENDIX 1 SIMULATION WITH NIGERIAN DATA

GADEI for Nigeria:

$$GADEI = \sum_{i=1}^5 w_i \cdot S_i$$

1. Indicator S_1 : Anti-corruption & Rule of Law

Data:

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score of 25/100, rank 145/180

Mo Ibrahim security and rule of law sub score: 39.7/100; overall governance score dropped –1.4 from 2014 to 2023

Normalized S_1 : ~0.40

2. Indicator S_2 : Transparency & Fiscal Accountability

Data:

Nigeria scored 31/100 on budget transparency (Open Budget Survey); public participation only 19/100

Federal MDAs—only 12 out of 511 complied with fiscal transparency criteria

Normalized S_2 : ~0.30

3. Indicator S_3 : Public Service Delivery Effectiveness

Data:

SERVICOM initiative active to improve public service quality

World Bank government effectiveness percentile ~8.5% (very low)

Normalized S_3 : ~0.10

4. Indicator S_4 : Participation & Citizen Engagement

Data:

Public participation in budget planning just 19/100

Mo Ibrahim participation & rights sub score: 47.9/100

Women's representation in parliament ~4.4%, rank 180/185

Normalized S_4 : ~0.25

5. Indicator S_5 : Economic Foundations & Institutional Capacity

Data:

Mo Ibrahim “foundations for economic opportunity” sub score: 48.6/100

Chandler Good Governance Index:

Financial stewardship: 0.36;

Strong institutions: 0.16

Normalized S_5 : ~0.30

Assigning Weights w_i

For illustration, suppose each dimension is equally important:

$w_1=w_2=w_3=w_4=w_5=0.20$

(In practice, weights would reflect policymaker priorities.)

Calculating GADEI

$GADEI_{\text{Nigeria}}=0.20(0.40)+0.20(0.30)+0.20(0.10)+0.20(0.25)+0.20(0.30) = 0.27$

GADEI \approx 0.27 (range 0–1)

Interpretation: Low overall governance effectiveness—below one-third of full scale—signalling significant weaknesses in rule of law, service delivery, transparency, and citizen engagement.

Summary Table

Dimension	Score S_i	Weight w_i	Contribution $w_i \cdot S_i$
Anti-corruption & Rule of Law	0.40	0.20	0.080
Transparency & Fiscal	0.30	0.20	0.060
Service Delivery	0.10	0.20	0.020
Participation & Engagement	0.25	0.20	0.050
Economic Foundations	0.30	0.20	0.060
Total GADEI	—	1.00	0.27

Policy Implications

Service Delivery (S_3) is especially weak—suggests urgent reform needed (e.g., more effective SERVICOM implementation).

Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (S_1) remain severely deficient; domestic and international oversight critical.

Transparency & Citizen Engagement need structural institutional fixes (e.g., for budget access, public hearings).

Economic & Institutional Capacity (S_5) is middling—potential for improvement via business environment and bureaucracy reform.