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# Mapping the evidence on state-society relations

The role of the state, the effectiveness of its institutions and its legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens are central to determining a country's prospects for stability and development. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals underscore the critical importance of the state-society relationship to global development.

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

## Sustainable Development Goal 16

Achieving the goal of improved state-society relations requires rigorous evidence about what works, for whom, how and why. In contribution to these efforts 3ie has produced an evidence gap map that consolidates evidence on the effect of interventions to improve state-society relations in low- and middle-income countries.

## Highlights

- The evidence base is growing, but the distribution is uneven across interventions and countries
- Most of the research is on public services and service performance outcomes.
- Fewer studies report outcomes for individuals, such as attitudes and rights.
- Notable evidence gaps include e-voting, training political actors, knowledge of citizenship and attitudes towards the state.
- The most notable evidence gap is that few reviews examine inclusive political processes.

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## Main findings

**The rigorous evidence base in this area is growing.** The number of studies being published has increased year-on-year since 2000. The proportion of studies using randomised designs has also increased, accounting for 80 per cent of all included studies in 2015.

**The spread of evidence across countries and regions is uneven.** There is limited or no evidence for many countries that face substantial governance challenges. More than half of the completed impact evaluations were conducted in only eight countries: Argentina, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Uganda, Mexico, Brazil and India.

**There are important gaps in the systematic review evidence base.** Most of them examine interventions pertaining to public institutions, whereas very few look at political processes, despite the number of impact evaluations in this area. Furthermore, relatively few reviews examine outcomes for individuals, such as changes in individuals' knowledge of their rights or responsibilities as citizens or their attitudes towards the state. New systematic reviews addressing these research gaps could be very valuable.

**Impact evaluations are also distributed unevenly across intervention types.** The intervention areas most extensively studied include information dissemination on

political processes, community-driven development and performance incentives for state employees. Institutional and service-based outcomes are more widely reported than outcomes for individuals, such as changes in their knowledge of citizenship rights or responsibilities or their attitudes towards the state. The most notable evidence gaps were in interventions in e-voting and training politicians and leaders, where we found only a handful of studies. Despite the widespread implementation of interventions involving citizen feedback mechanisms and civil society's involvement in priority setting, the number of studies in these areas is still relatively small.



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## How to read the EGM

EGMs are presented using an interactive online platform which allows users to explore the evidence base and findings of relevant studies. Bubbles appearing at intersections between interventions and outcomes denote the existence of a study or studies.

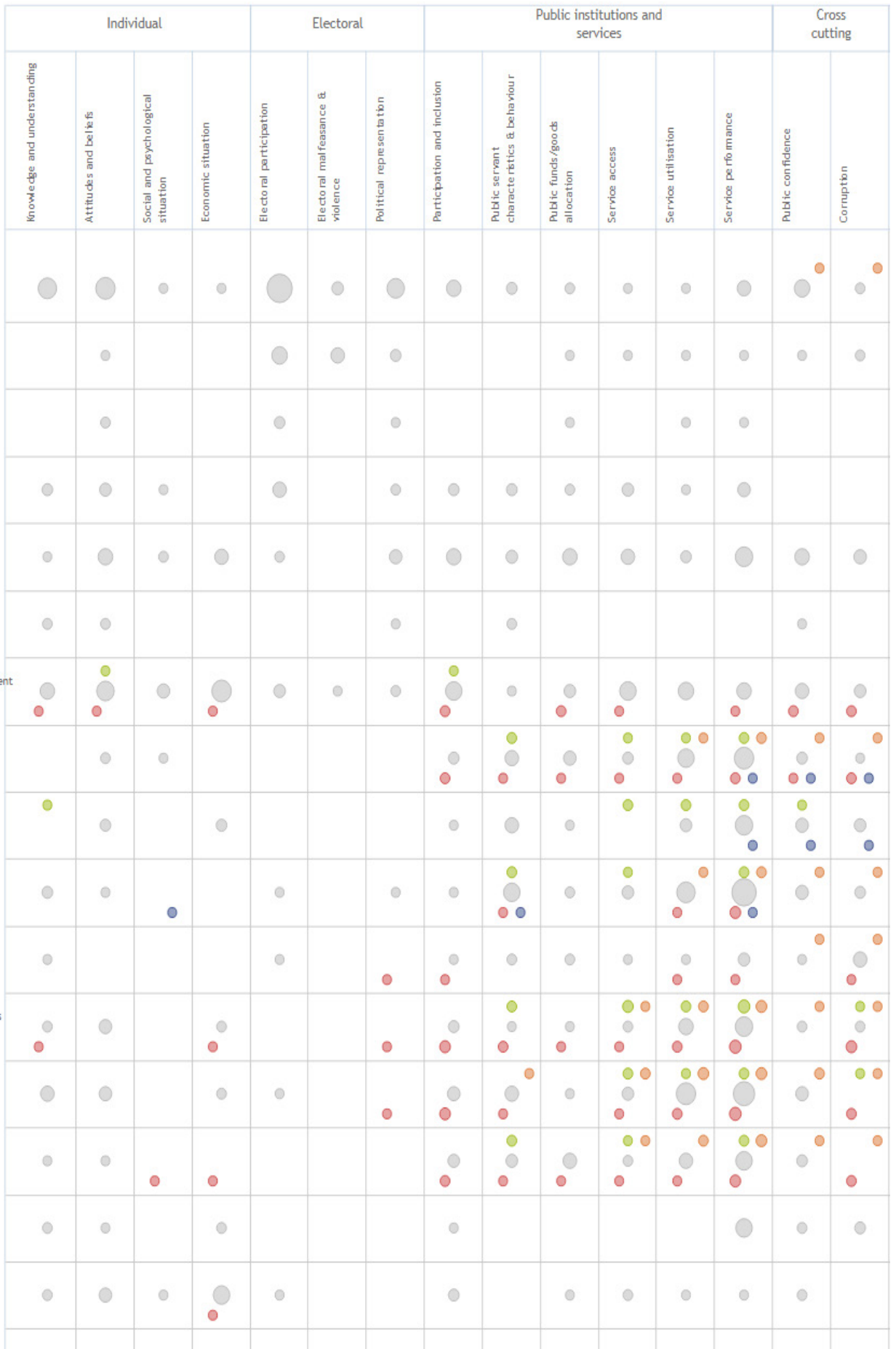
The larger the bubble, the greater the volume of evidence in that cell. The colours of the bubbles represent the type of evidence and a quality rating as indicated in the legend in the figure. In the online version of the EGM, hovering over a bubble, displays a list of all the

included studies for that cell. The hyperlinks for these studies lead to user friendly summaries on the 3ie evidence database. Users can filter the evidence by type of evidence, quality rating (for systematic reviews), region, country, study design and population.

# State-society relations evidence gap map

## Outcomes

## Interventions



● Impact evaluations ● High confidence ● Medium confidence ● Low confidence ● Protocol

## What are evidence gap maps?

3ie evidence gap maps are thematic collections of information about impact evaluations and systematic reviews that measure the effects of international development policies and programmes. The maps present a visual overview of existing and ongoing studies in a sector or sub-sector in terms of the types of programmes evaluated and the

outcomes measured. Evidence from these studies is mapped onto this framework graphically, identifying where evidence exists and where there are gaps.

Map reports provide all of the supporting documentation for the maps themselves, including the background information for the theme

of the map, methods and results, including the protocols and the analysis of the results. 3ie evidence gap maps are available through an online interactive platform on the 3ie website that allows users to explore the studies and reviews in each map. Visit <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/evidence/gap-maps/> to find out more.

## About this map

This brief is based on *State-society relations in low- and middle-income countries: An evidence gap map*, 3ie evidence gap map report 7, by Daniel Phillips, Chris Coffey, Emma Gallagher, Paul Fenton Villar, Jennifer Stevenson, Stergiani Tsoli, Sharnic Dhanasekar and John Eyers.

This report and the interactive version of the map are available on 3ie's website at <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/evidence/gap-maps/>.

We included 305 completed and 60 ongoing impact evaluations and 18 completed and 2 ongoing systematic

reviews that met our criteria. We categorised this evidence according to 16 intervention types and 15 outcome types; all are classified within Sustainable Development Goal 16's domains of inclusive political processes and responsive and accountable institutions.



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The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) is an international grant-making NGO promoting evidence-informed development policies and programmes. We are the global leader in funding, producing and synthesising high-quality evidence of what works, for whom, why and at what cost. We believe that high-quality and policy-relevant evidence will help make development more effective and improve people's lives.

For more information on 3ie's systematic reviews, contact [info@3ieimpact.org](mailto:info@3ieimpact.org) or visit our website.

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