

# Accountability mechanisms

CCT programs in Latin America

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# Implementation challenges of CTs

- Number of participants and volume of individual payments large.
- Responsibilities shared across levels of government (and among departments).
- Highly visible initiatives.
- Sufficient control and accountability mechanisms are critical to minimize and manage political risks and to ensure effective implementation and sustainability

# Some givens

1. No *program is immune from error, and no controls work perfectly.*
2. Program accountability and control depend on a broad range of factors and mechanisms, and on their interrelationships.
3. SCT programs are never isolated; they reflect overall national governance.
4. Check reality

**Table 2. Pros and Cons of Selected Control and Accountability Mechanisms**

<b>Mechanisms</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<i>Top Down</i>		
<b>Supreme audit institutions</b>	Country systems, resources, international standards	Influence/effectiveness depends on their standing in country
<b>Call centers</b>	Client service, important in decentralized environments, accountability, monitoring	Needs to operate very well, or can backfire
<b>Public prosecutors</b>	Accountability, consequences for corruption	Impact limited, few cases, expensive
<b>Spot checks</b>	Manageable, provides quick feedback on implementation	None really
<b>Crosschecking data bases</b>	Inexpensive, quick	Need to have technical prerequisites in place (unique ID, informatics capacity and expertise)
<b>Concurrent audits</b>	Provides timely information that can be acted on in the short-run	Cost considerations
<b>Public disclosure of information on program</b>	Transparency, not costly since program should have information	Privacy issues
<b>Evaluation</b>	Most basic accountability, independent	Delays in results, expensive to do everywhere
<i>Bottom-Up</i>		
<b>Neighborhood and municipal commissions with civil society, beneficiary participation</b>	Takes advantage of skills/commitments in some places, may be closer to beneficiaries	Depends on volunteers, role needs to be defined carefully, can't make up for general weaknesses
<b>Committees of mothers</b>	Empowerment of beneficiaries, close to clients, strong self-interest	Depends on volunteers, may become "intermediaries"
<b>Civil society organizations</b>	Third-party, close to client	Potential conflict of interest, lines of accountability?

# Questions for you

- How do you know if beneficiaries are aware of their entitlements?
- What are the “formal” and “social” accountability systems in your country?
- What are the checks and balances for those who handle complaints?
- How does your management review those and take corrections?
- Can your program link with other accountability mechanisms at the local level to ensure the rights of children and women and other vulnerable excluded groups?

# More on this

- [www.worldbank.org/lacsocialprotection](http://www.worldbank.org/lacsocialprotection)
- Control and accountability mechanisms in CCT programs: A review of programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. 2007. Operational Innovations in LAC, Vol.1. No 1.

