



Accountability and Engagement of Global Institutions Involved in Climate Change

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Introduction

The Climate Governance study

Power, equity and accountability in global climate change governance is a three-year ESRC/DFID-funded research project that investigates the governance and accountability of institutions at three levels of decision making: global institutions (IBRD, WHO and WTO), bilateral donors (DFID) and aid-recipient governments (Government of Ghana). The research is conducted with reference to two 'tracer' issues — technology/energy and population dynamics — and has **four phases**:

1. Assessing the accountability capabilities of the study organisations
2. Exploring the preparedness of the study institutions to respond to climate change issues
3. Assessing the responsiveness of the Government of Ghana to climate change challenges
4. Developing a new conceptual framework for understanding development in the context of climate change.

In this poster we present preliminary findings from the first two phases focussing on the **three global multilateral institutions**. We respond to the following **research questions**:

- To measure the accountability capabilities of case-study institutions.
- To understand the views and engagement of organisational actors in climate change discourse, policy development and related activities.

Case study organisations

The project focuses on three key actors in global climate change governance, namely:

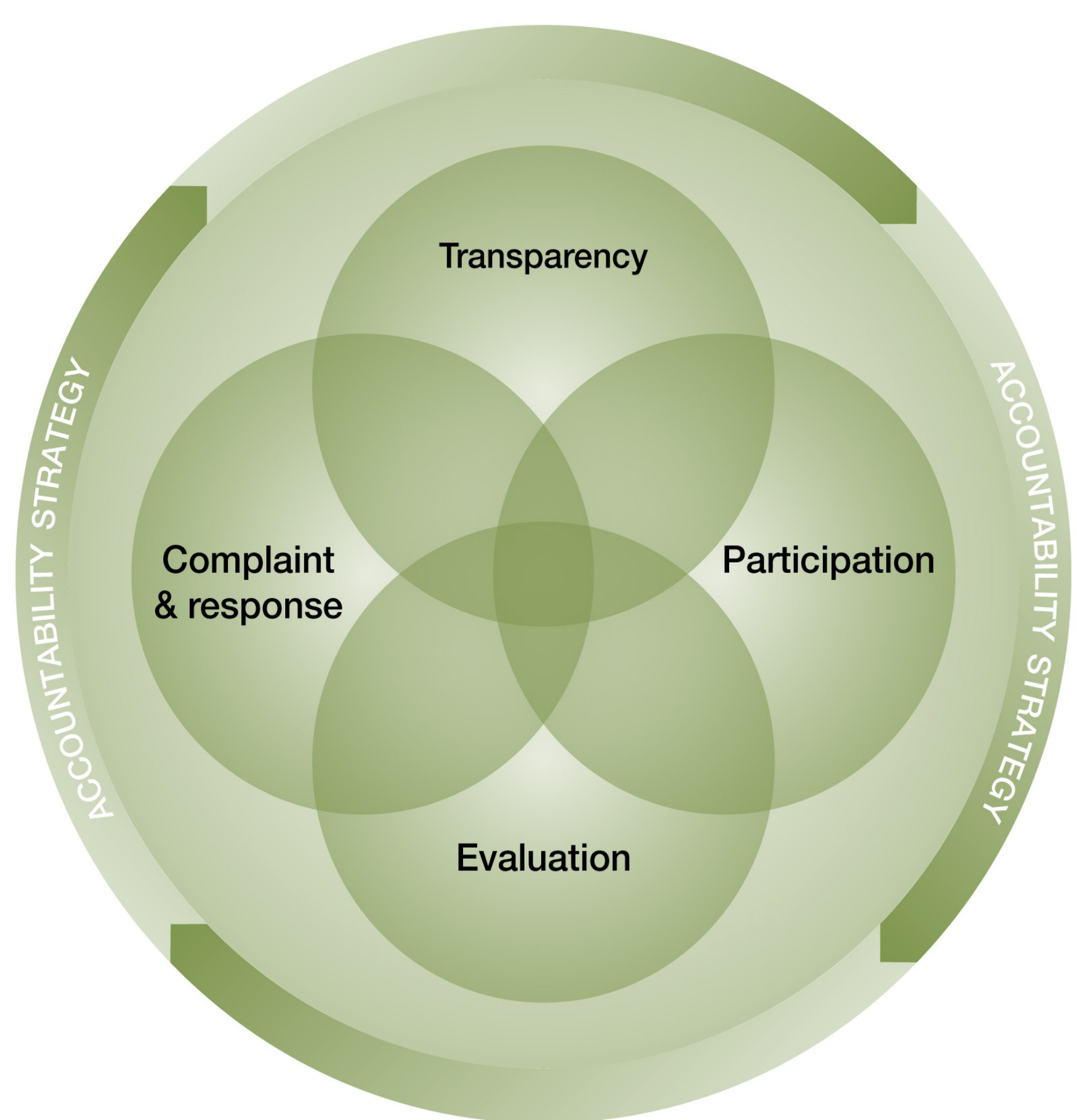
- The **World Bank** (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, IBRD) as a global research, programme, and funding body in development and climate change, and increasingly a manager and governing body for global climate finance.
- The **World Health Organization** (WHO) as a key policy maker and standards setter in the domain of population dynamics and public health.
- The **World Trade Organization** (WTO) as a regulator and adjudicator in issues of global trade affecting access to energy and technology for both developing and developed countries.

Phase 1: Accountability assessment

The Global Accountability Framework

The project uses a qualitative scoring framework, developed and applied over many years by the One World Trust, for measuring global organisations' accountability policies and management systems. It is based on over 50 graded good practice-based indicators, grouped by five mutually-reinforcing dimensions of accountability, shown in the figure below.

The key dimensions of the Pathways to Accountability II framework

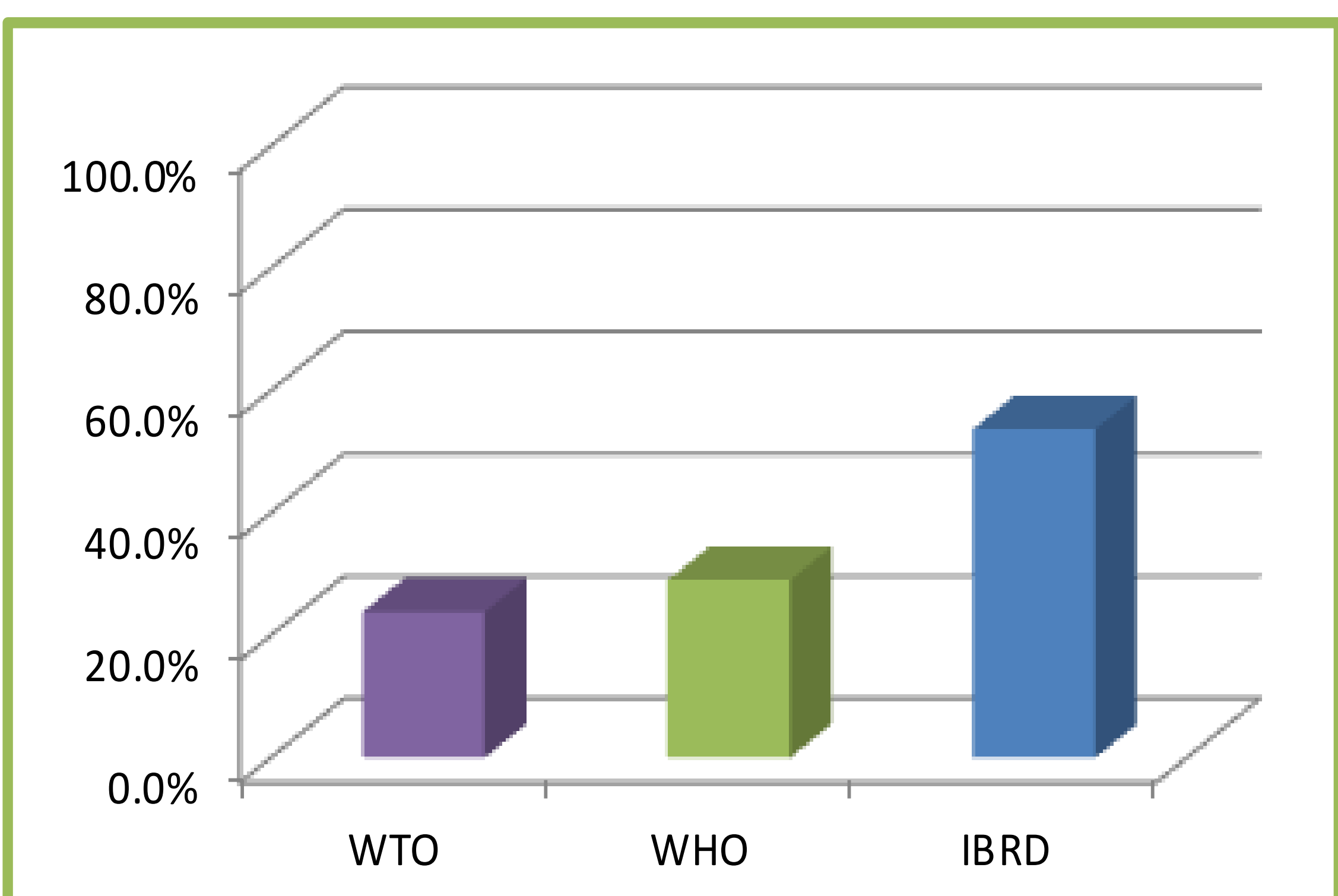


www.oneworldtrust.org/publications/doc_download/470-pathways-to-accountability-ii

Results of the accountability assessment

At an aggregate level, the three global institutions were found to display quite different levels of accountability capabilities (scored out of 100%). This shows that not all institutions are similarly prepared to respond to the changing demands of engagement with multiple and new stakeholders that arise from new challenges such as climate change. Of the reviewed organisations, only the IBRD rises to broadly satisfactory levels of performance.

Accountability capability of global organisations



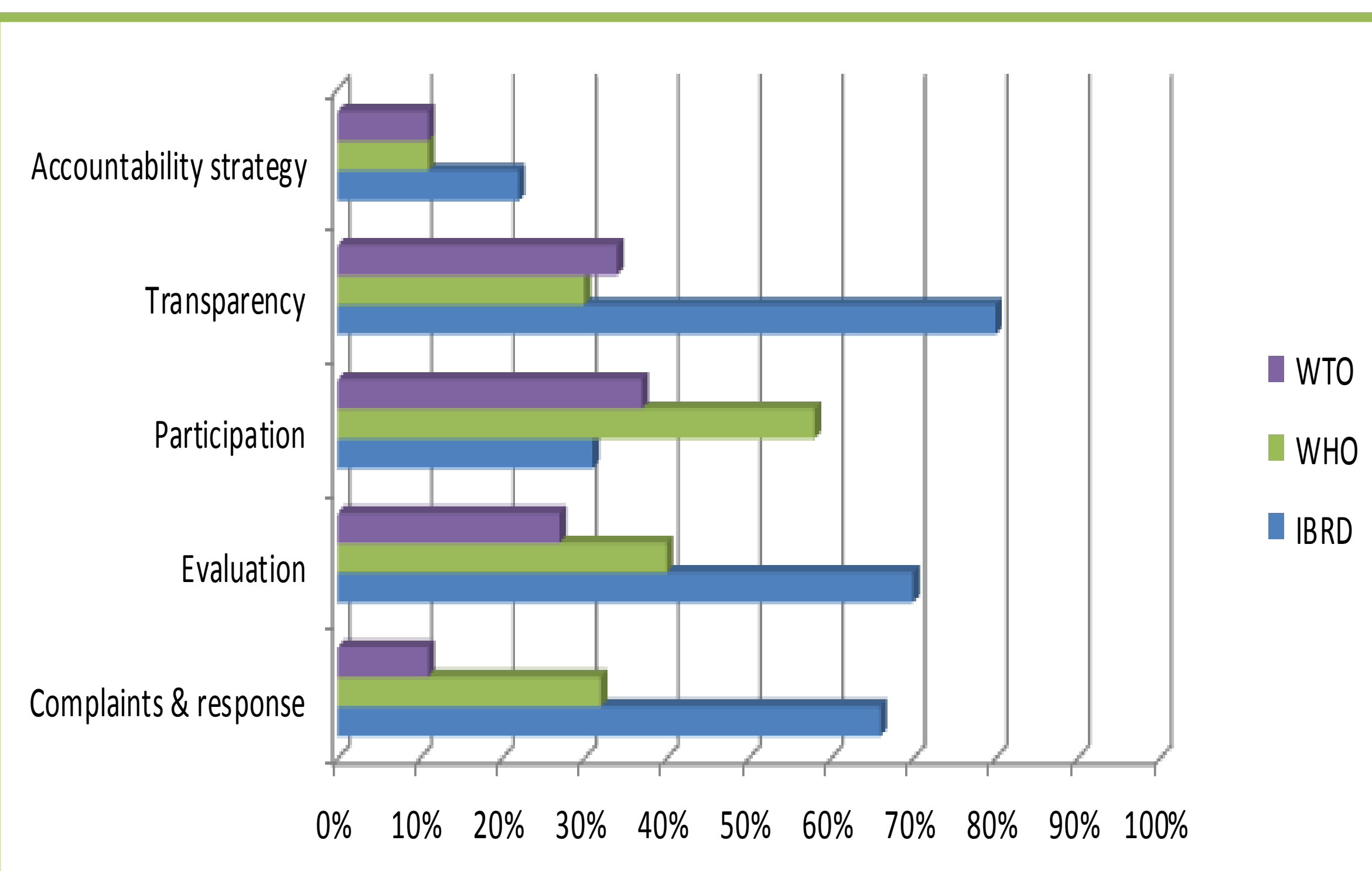
At a more detailed level, the IBRD is still confirmed as leader in the sample, but strengths and weaknesses become more differentiated.

Detailed accountability findings

Accountability strategy: All three organisations fail to demonstrate an overarching concept for how they intend to be accountable to their stakeholders. While all identify some of their stakeholders, none has undertaken a comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise at the global level and only rarely (with some differences) do they commit to external accountability standards.

Transparency: This dimension revealed the largest variation in capability, with the WHO not having a transparency policy at all, and hence scoring very low, while the recent revision of the IBRD's transparency policy, which introduced a number of positive changes, including the presumption of disclosure, put it in advance of the others.

Accountability capability across five dimensions



Participation: All three organisations showed major disparities between their capability to be accountable to external stakeholders and the power they afford their members through internal member control policies and systems. All organisations performed relatively poorly on external stakeholder participation. In particular the unmitigated unequal voting rights in the IBRD's governing bodies, and the WTO practice of Green Rooms, to which not all members are admitted, lowered those organisations' scores.

Evaluation: The IBRD stands out as being very capable in this dimension, while the WHO performs poorly because it evaluates only its technical assistance activities, which constitute only one of the six main functions of the organisation. The WHO has scope to improve in this area, and the fact that it is currently going through the approval phases for a new evaluation policy may help.

Complaints & response: The IBRD is much further ahead in this area than the other organisations and displays a good level of capability. The WHO is the next-best performing organisation, and performs fairly well on whistle-blower complaints, but very poorly on complaints from external stakeholders. The WTO does not have a policy or quality management systems in place to handle complaints from external stakeholders, and its whistle-blower policy is also quite weak.

Phase 2: How do organisations engage with climate change?

Eight in-depth qualitative interviews, using respondent-specific topic guides, have been conducted with senior representatives in the three global organisations between 3 November and 12 December 2011. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded using atlas.ti software, and finally analysed using a framework approach. In addition, documents relating to the organisations' structure and mission were analysed.

Preliminary findings

Preliminary findings from the global organisations show that similar factors affect the way in which these organisations engage with climate change. These factors include the organisations' missions, leaders, structures and accountability capabilities. However, the three organisations studied demonstrate significant differences in the way in which they engage with climate change as a result of divergences in these same factors and the power and interests of the different internal and external stakeholders involved.

World Bank

Mission: The IBRD's mission is "to reduce poverty in middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries". In 2008, the World Bank Group (WBG) adopted a strategy on development and climate change, focused on ensuring that developmental gains are not lost due to climate change.

Leadership: Climate change became a priority of the World Bank during the tenure of the current President. In 2010, the President created the position of Special Envoy for Climate Change and training is available to staff to engage with the topic.

"Round the time of the Bali COP... was probably the point at which... the [Bank's] interest in climate change really took off, and the Bank began to engage with this in a much more serious way, and to staff up, you know, accordingly- to bring in people who could deal with some of these issues."

Structures: Created in 2010, the Special Envoy for Climate Change is a Vice-Presidential-level coordination role, because the President wanted one person who would be "freed up to focus on one thing [climate change] because it's so important, across the whole piece". The Envoy engages in the global dialogue and helps to set strategy and oversee implementation. The Envoy works with staff across the WBG in addition to Country Directors who are largely responsible for implementation; there are specific research programmes and teams working on climate change including the Climate Change Team, the Climate Finance and Carbon Market Group, and the Climate Investment Fund unit.

World Health Organization

Mission: The WHO's mission is "the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health". The WHO regards its role in climate change governance as representing the health field and providing advice on policy development and technical support. In 2008, the World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted a resolution on climate change and health, which gave the WHO a more formal mandate to work on this issue.

Leadership: In 2007, the Director-General of the WHO identified climate change as a priority for the organisation, leading to wide support by membership of the 2008 WHA resolution. Nevertheless, "Some felt we should have been doing more earlier on and that we were behind the game..." WHO recognises health has been "a bit forgotten" in the climate change debate, and there is acknowledgment that "initially it was mainly the health sector's fault for not engaging properly for a long time". It remains unclear how WHO is engaging with other global institutions engaged in climate change — it does not work with the World Bank for example, and evidently finds it difficult to engage the UNFCCC ("the climate change negotiations are now so well established that it is difficult to [change the] central focus.").

Structures: The Department of Public Health and Environment (PHE) (in Secretariat) is responsible for the organisation's engagement with climate change, including advising other WHO departments engaging in research. The DG's decision to make climate change a priority is seen internally as the main incentive for other departments to work with the PHE.

World Trade Organization

Mission: The WTO's mission is to "open trade for the benefit of all." Whilst the organisation does not have a particular remit to address climate change, the *Agreement Establishing the WTO* recognises that members should have regard for the objective of sustainable development. There is a strong view in the organisation that because trade is only one dimension of the climate change issue, the WTO can only engage with climate change in a limited way, primarily by reducing barriers to trade in environmentally-friendly goods and services: "the trade dimension is not central to the climate crisis. So in that sense, the WTO doesn't play a central role in the governance of climate change..."

Leadership: As a convening organisation the WTO is strongly 'members-driven', and all member states must agree in order for new policies to be adopted. The Secretariat has some power to raise the profile of certain issues through its research programme, decided by the Director-General, but "until consensus is reached amongst the membership, the Secretariat's role is to remain neutral to the different decisions of the membership. [...] we have to reflect the divergence that there is across our membership on any particular issue."

Structures: Climate change issues relating to trade can be discussed in the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) and the Committee on Trade and Environment Special Session (CTESS). Both committees are supported by the Trade and Environment Division of the WTO Secretariat. In practice, however, many developing countries try to keep discussion of climate-related trade issues (e.g. carbon taxes) limited to the UNFCCC fora where their interests will not be overpowered by developed nations: "because when you discuss in WTO — you know, question of legality comes in [...] I think that climate change you go back to this principle of common but different responsibilities. [...] So they know they have the upper hand there ..."

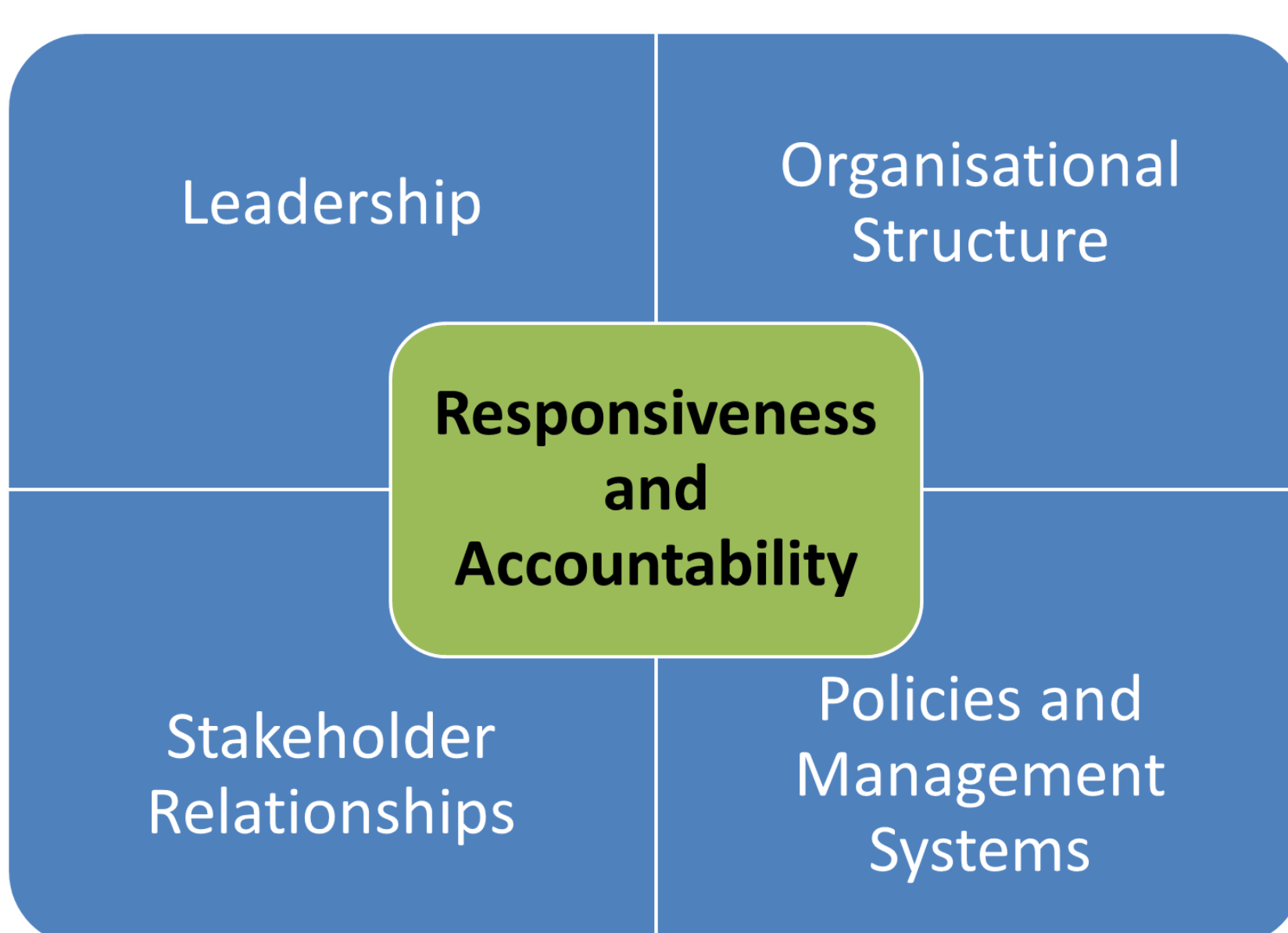
Emerging conditions for organisational responsiveness and accountability

Although preliminary, our findings indicate a number of factors that influence whether and how international organisations engage and respond to the new challenges associated with climate change, and engage with the changing array of stakeholders in an accountable manner. These include leadership (manifest in high-level speeches and organisational change), internal organisational structure (including capacity for flexible engagement across sectors and multiple stakeholders), policies and management systems, and the ability to build relationships with critical stakeholders (such as member states, civil society groups, knowledge communities, etc.).

Strong leadership at the **WBG**

and a cross-cutting remit for its Special Envoy for Climate Change have enabled it to achieve a significant global presence in climate governance. Yet the unequal weight of its

Emerging conditions for responsiveness and accountability



members in decision-making is a challenge to the accountability of its decision-making. In spite of the WHO's formal mandate to work on climate change, and a dedicated team to conduct that work, the organisation appears to have made little progress in terms of influencing the global dialogue and rarely engages with other key players or sectors. The power of WTO's members is decisive in terms of its engagement with climate change. Even on trade-related climate-relevant topics, many developing countries would prefer such discussions take place in the UNFCCC, so these issues are rarely discussed, and the organisation finds it hard to take a position on them.